

CultureGramsTM

Teaching Activities

New! Olympics Activities

K–5

Olympic Opening Ceremony
Getting to the Games
Vancouver 2010

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Cultural Sensitivity Training
Designing Olympic Medals
Languages of the Olympics
A Visit to China
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Grades K–5

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Olympics Activities

Olympic Opening Ceremony

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn about the cultural traits of China and another chosen country and participate in a mock Olympic Opening Ceremony.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 1: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions (e.g., in terms of environment and resources, technology, food, shelter, social organization, beliefs and customs, schooling, what girls and boys are allowed to do).
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Understands how cultures differ in their use of similar environments and resources (e.g., comparing how people live in Phoenix, Arizona, with how people live in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [Early Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture.
- Standard E [Early Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 2 hours

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#)

Art materials—construction paper, scissors, glue, pens, etc.

Instructions

1. China is preparing to host the 2008 Olympic Games in its capital city, Beijing. Have students prepare to hold a mock Olympic Opening Ceremony. Begin by having them learn more about China. Each student should read through the [Kids Edition China report](#). Have students write down the most interesting thing they discovered about

China as they read. Have them share their findings in a classroom discussion. Also, ask them what preparations they would make if they were a nation planning to host the Olympics.

2. Assign each student (or have each student select) another country in the Kids Edition series. Have them prepare to represent their country in the Opening Ceremony by reading that country's report. Students should prepare a short (one minute) presentation highlighting the country.
3. Using the [Flag Gallery](#), print the flag outline for each student's country. Have the students color in the flag. Alternatively, have them create their nation's flag out of art materials, using the flag image in the Kids Edition as a model.
4. Begin the Opening Ceremony by having one student or group of students act as a representative of China (in addition to their assignment for another country) to welcome the visiting nations. Then have each student present his or her assigned nation's flag (all of which should then be posted together in a prominent spot in the classroom) and give the short presentation. End the Opening Ceremony by "lighting the cauldron" (using orange foil or other art materials).

Extension Activity

Have students follow the success of their nations' athletes during the games using the Internet and other news sources. Use the success of a particular athlete or team to launch a short review discussion (based on the student's presentation) about that country.

Getting to the Games

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will be able to compare the distances that athletes must travel to get to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China. They will also calculate travel times, depending on the mode of travel.

National curriculum standard(s)

Principles & Standards for School Mathematics

Grades 3–5 Expectations: Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates

- develop fluency with basic number combinations for multiplication and division and use these combinations to mentally compute related problems;
- develop fluency in adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing whole numbers;
- develop and use strategies to estimate computations involving fractions and decimals in situations relevant to students' experience;
- select appropriate methods and tools for computing with whole numbers from among mental computation, estimation, calculators, and paper and pencil according to the context and nature of the computation and use the selected method or tools.

Developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Time requirement

Preparation: 5 minutes

In-class: 30 minutes

Materials

Distance Calculator in the CultureGrams [World Edition](#) or [Kids Edition](#)

Calculator

Instructions

1. Have the students go to the landing page for any country in the World Edition or the Kids Edition and then click on the Distance Calculator in the right-hand column, under the Tools category.
2. Each student should create a table to track the results of their investigation. The table should include four columns and five rows. In the first column, the student should pick five countries from different parts the world and record a country name in each row in the column. In the second column, the students should list the corresponding capital city for each country. The remaining two columns will be filled out in the succeeding steps.
3. Have each student use the Distance Calculator to determine how far an athlete would have to travel from each of the five country capitals to get to Beijing. Record those results in the third column. Students could list miles or kilometers.
4. Have students calculate how long (in hours) it would take these athletes to travel to Beijing by plane or by car. To do this, students must take the total distance and divide it by the average speed per hour in order to figure out the total travel time in hours. Assume the journey can be made in a straight line (unhindered by bodies of water or other geographical features) and that the average speed for a plane is 540 miles (869 kilometers) per hour and the average speed for a car is 60 miles (97 kilometers) per hour. Students should record the respective times for travel by plane and automobile in the fourth column of the table.
5. Have students exchange their tables with their classmates so that class members can check the accuracy of the calculations. (Optional.)

Questions for further discussion

What disadvantages might athletes face who have to travel long distances to compete in the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing versus those who live nearby?

Vancouver 2010

Discussion and Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students explore and familiarize themselves with the Canadian province of British Columbia in preparation for the upcoming 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Geography

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

McREL Life Skills Standards

Working with Others

- Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group.
 - Level IV [Grade K–12] Benchmark 2: Works cooperatively within a group to complete tasks, achieve goals, and solve problems.

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams Provinces Edition—[British Columbia report](#)

Instructions

1. Introduce the activity by discussing the concept of the Olympic Games. Explain that the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympics will take place in Vancouver, British Columbia. Spend some time discussing with the class what qualities and conditions a city, province, or country must meet in order to be chosen to host the Olympic Games.
2. Break students up into groups and have each group read through the Provinces Edition [British Columbia report](#), paying particular attention to the sections that describe the factors that make it a good home for the Winter Games (e.g., the Climate and Geography sections) as well as the province's unique cultural and historical aspects (e.g., the Cultural Burst and Totem Poles sections) that might play a role during the Vancouver Olympic Games.
3. Have each group summarize and present their findings. As a class, discuss what they have learned about British Columbia and why Vancouver was chosen to host the 2010 Games.

Cultural Sensitivity Training

Presentation

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will assume the role of cultural trainers whose responsibility it is to prepare U.S. athletes for the upcoming Summer Games in Beijing. Either individually or in groups, students will prepare short oral presentations that are intended to sensitize the athletes to the importance of recognizing and adapting to cultural differences.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Global Connections

- Standard A [Middle Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can describe instances in which language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements can facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 15 minutes

In-class: 90 minutes (spread over two class periods)

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Assign students, either individually or in groups, countries on which to prepare presentations. Making assignments will insure a greater variety of countries and cultures, and it will help avoid duplication.
2. Each student or group of students should review the CultureGrams report for their assigned country. As they read the text, they should identify concepts that would be important for an athlete to know if they were to meet and associate with someone from that country. Students may make note of where a country is located, what the land and climate is like, what type of government the country has, etc. But most importantly, they should focus on matters of culture that might be important in everyday interactions. What information would be critical for a person to have in order to understand someone from the assigned country? Some questions to consider:
 - a. What ethnic groups are there?
 - b. What languages do people speak?
 - c. What are the most prominent religions? And how might someone's religious belief affect their daily behavior?
 - d. What common attitudes and values are shared by people in the country?
 - e. What do people in the country commonly wear?
 - f. How do people greet each other?
 - g. Are there gestures a person needs to know or should avoid using because they are potentially offensive?
 - h. What foods are typically eaten in the country? What customs are there that accompany eating?
 - i. What aspects of the lifestyle in the country are important to be aware of when you meet a person from the country?
 - j. What games and sports are popular?
3. After gathering information from the CultureGrams report, students should prepare a five-minute presentation in which they organize and highlight the most important points for an athlete from the United States to know when meeting a person from their assigned country.

Questions for further discussion

1. Would it be especially difficult for U.S. athletes to interact with people from particular countries? Why?
2. Why is it important to recognize the cultural similarities and differences that exist among human beings?

Extension Activity

Assign students to make a poster of critical “dos and don’ts” when encountering someone from their assigned country.

Designing Olympic Medals

Activity

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will design an Olympic medal based on what they learn about the culture of a country.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Places and Regions

- Standard 6: The geographically informed person knows and understands how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development of culture.

People, Places, and Environments

- Standard E [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *people, places, and environments*, so that the learner can describe ways that historical events have been influenced by, and have influenced, physical and human geographic factors in local, regional, national, and global settings.

Global Connections

- Standard A [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can describe instances in which language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements can facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding.
- Standard B [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 15 minutes

In-class: 60 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)

Art materials—construction paper, scissors, glue, pens, etc.

Instructions

1. Ask each student to choose a country and read its CultureGrams report. Students should make note of things that set the country apart and that citizens of the country would be especially proud of.
2. Explain to the students that the design of the Olympic medals combines the history of the Olympic Games with the culture of the host country. Each host country designs the medal that hundreds of athletes will compete for that year. Have students look at the design and background information for the [medals for the 2008 Games in Beijing](#). Hold a class discussion about which elements of the culture the design incorporates and why.
3. Ask students to design an Olympic medal for the country they researched. They must incorporate aspects of the country's culture as well as images from ancient Greek culture and the history of the Olympic Games. You may wish to determine the format (paper, poster, digital design, etc.) or leave it open to the students.
4. In small groups or in front of the class, have students explain why they chose to include each element of their medal.

Extension activity

Each country that hosts the Olympics designs a logo for the games. The logo may feature a symbol of the country or it may simply try to capture the excitement of the games. While each country adds their own elements to the logo, almost all logos incorporate the Olympic rings, one of the most recognizable symbols of the games. Have the students research past Olympic logos on the Internet and then design one (either digitally or on paper) to represent the country whose CultureGrams report they read.

Languages of the Olympics

Activity

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will learn phrases and gestures they would use when first meeting someone from another culture.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Places and Regions

- Standard 6: The geographically informed person knows and understands how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development of culture.

People, Places, and Environments

- Standard E [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *people, places, and environments*, so that the learner can describe ways that historical events have been influenced by, and have influenced, physical and human geographic factors in local, regional, national, and global settings.

Global Connections

- Standard A [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can describe instances in which language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements can facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding.
- Standard B [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 15 minutes

In-class: 45–60 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)

Art materials—construction paper, scissors, glue, pens, etc. (for extension activity)

Video camera (for extension activity)

Instructions:

1. People from around the world come together for the Olympic Games. The Olympic Village (where athletes stay during the) is a center for languages and cultures and the first stop for most athletes arriving in the host country. Have students prepare to meet and greet the athletes as though they were hosts at the Olympic Village. Divide the students into groups of three or four. Assign each group five countries whose CultureGrams they will study, paying special attention to the language and greetings sections. The groups will then train the other Olympic Village hosts (the rest of the class) on how to interact with athletes from the countries they studied.
2. Each group should learn to say hello in the countries' languages and any gestures that go with a greeting. They may also learn things that people from that country might consider impolite.

3. Have each group take a turn teaching the class how to greet a person from the countries they studied. They should also explain things that hosts should be aware of when interacting with athletes from these countries. Include greetings, “dos and don’ts,” and gestures.

Extension Activity:

Have students create a video clip as a virtual welcome for those athletes who arrive after the hosts have gone home. Have the students make a sign with each country’s name in both English and the native language to use in the video clip for that country.

A Visit to China

Research and Discussion

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students use text and photos to identify cultural characteristics of China.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [High School]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can apply an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns.

People, Places, and Environments

- Standard E [High School]: Social studies programs should include experience that provide for the study of *people, places, and environments*, so that the learner can describe, differentiate, and explain the relationships among various regional and global patterns of geographic phenomena such as landforms, soils, climate, vegetation, natural resources, and population.

Global Connections

- Standard B [High School]: Social studies programs should include experience that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can explain conditions and motivations that contribute to conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition—China](#)

CultureGrams [Photo Gallery—China](#)

Instructions

1. Give each student a copy of (or have each student access) the [World Edition report for China](#) and have him or her read it before class. Instruct the students that as they read the report, they should pay particular attention to the sections under the Customs and Courtesies heading: Greetings, Gestures, Visiting, and Eating.
2. Have each student make a list of 10 “dos and don’ts” for interacting with Chinese they think a visitor to China should know, using the information in these four sections. For example, “Do maintain a respectful distance when speaking with older people” or “Don’t place your chopsticks in the rice bowl when finished with your meal.”
3. Discuss the students’ findings as a class. How easy could it be for a North American to violate these behavioral norms? What could be the possible outcomes of violating these expectations?
4. For a second assignment, have the students read the report again before class. This time, have them pay attention to the contrasts between life in urban China and life in rural China. You may want to point out the specific sections in which contrasts are identified (e.g., General Attitudes, Personal Appearance, Housing, and Economy).
5. As a class, discuss how a visit to a rural area would be different than a visit to a major city. What challenges would a traveler face in each environment?

Extension activity

Have the students access the [China photos](#) in the CultureGrams Photo Gallery. Many of these photos portray people doing everyday things. Have each student select a photo and write a short story about a person pictured. Have the students describe what the person is doing in the photo, but also have them imagine what isn’t pictured—the other activities the person might carry out in a typical day.

Campaign for the Olympics

Activity

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students research an assigned country and develop a PowerPoint presentation arguing why their country should host the next Olympic Games. Students will gain a sense of audience, visual rhetoric, and persuasive strategies while presenting their argument to the class.

National Curriculum Standards

McREL Language Arts Standards

Listening and Speaking

- Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.
 - Level II [Grade 3–5] Benchmark 7: Makes oral presentations to class (e.g., uses subject-related information and vocabulary; includes content appropriate to the audience; relates ideas and observations; incorporates visual aids or props; incorporates several sources of information).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Standards for the English Language Arts

- Standard 8: Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association

Time requirement

In-class: 50 minutes (spread over two class periods)

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#) and/or [Kids Edition](#)

CultureGrams [Photo Gallery](#), [Slideshow Gallery](#), and [Video Gallery](#)

Instructions

1. Introduce the concept of the Olympic Games and the process of a city and/or country campaigning for the chance to host the games. Point out that the International Olympic Committee is the governing body who votes on and decides which city and/or country will host the games.
2. Assign several students to serve on the International Olympic Committee. These students will decide which country will host the Olympics based on the cases presented. Assign the remaining students to each pick a different country. Then give them time to read through their country's CultureGrams report.
3. Assign students to create a PowerPoint presentation, outlining the reasons their country should be chosen to host the next Olympic Games. Encourage them to use the Photo, Video, and Slideshow Galleries to find images and/or footage to incorporate into their presentations.
4. Have students present their country's cases to the class and have the committee vote for the most successful and/or persuasive presentation and explain their reasons for their decision.

Predicting Performance

Analysis

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will learn different ways of measuring and predicting the performance of countries competing at the Olympics.

National curriculum standard(s)

Principles and Standards for School Mathematics

- Data Analysis and Probability Standard: Instructional programs from prekindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them.
 - [Grades 9–12]: All students should understand the differences among various kinds of studies and which types of inferences can legitimately be drawn from each.
 - [Grades 9–12]: All students should compute and interpret the expected value of random variables in simple cases.

Developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 90–120 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams World Edition [Comparison Table](#) and [Population Table](#)

Medals tables from [Sydney 2000](#) and [Athens 2004](#) Summer Olympic Games

Converted medals tables (see below)

Excel or other spreadsheet program (optional)

Instructions

1. Show the students the final medal tables from [Sydney](#) and [Athens](#). Then show them TABLE 1 (below), a revised table in which medals have been converted into *medal points* (three for gold, two for silver, and one for bronze).
2. Point out that the same five countries occupy the top five places at both games in the same order. Then inform them that the next ten places are also occupied by the same countries (albeit with minor differences in the order). Ask your students what inferences can be drawn from the fact that the same 15 countries occupy the top 15 places in the medals tables from the Sydney and Athens games. What (if any) geographic, economic, or cultural traits do these countries share?
3. Now show the students TABLE 2, which ranks (highest to lowest) the top 15 medal-winning countries in terms of their combined performances at both the Sydney and Athens games. Explain the differences between medal points as an absolute and medal points as a function of some other variable such as population. Ask your students to guess which of the top 15 medal-winning countries won the most medal points per million inhabitants.
4. Access the World Edition [Comparison Table](#) and create a table showing the populations of the 15 countries. Ask your students to compare the population table with the consolidated medal points table. What correlations do they notice? Does anything stand out? (Correlations: China, USA, and Russia occupy the top three positions in both tables, and Hungary is at the foot of both. Discrepancy: Australia, twelfth in population, is fourth in medal points.)
5. Now show your students TABLE 3, which shows medal points as a function of population. It is sorted (highest to lowest) by medal points per games per million residents. (To simplify the math, the following calculations are based on current population, not the somewhat different population numbers of 2000 and 2004.)
6. Did any student guess the top country (see item 2)? Australia—the overall winner in medals as a function of population—averages the equivalent of one gold, one silver, and one-fifth of a bronze per million inhabitants. China—the last of the top 15 medal-winning countries—averages the equivalent of just over one-tenth of a bronze per million inhabitants. The United States—the clear winner in the absolute medal count—averages the equivalent of just over two-thirds of a bronze per million inhabitants. Discuss with the students reasons there might be such a marked discrepancy between the absolute and relative medal counts.

Extension activity

Have students select three countries that do not figure in the top 15 medal-winning countries. With reference to the [Sydney](#) and [Athens](#) medal tables and to the CultureGrams World Edition [Population Table](#) and using the formula specified below the table in item 4, calculate the medal-points-per-games-per-million-residents ratio for each country. Have them multiply that ratio by the overall population and divide by one million to find the number of medal points a country would win at the Beijing games if it performed at the exact level it did at the Sydney and Athens games. Then have them follow the progress of their three countries at Beijing 2008 and see how closely their final medal point counts approximate the figures computed above. What factors might explain any discrepancies?

TABLE 1

Country	Points–Sydney*	Points–Athens
USA	213	190
Russia	173	180
China	144	131
Australia	99	115
Germany	91	99
Japan	78	36
France	64	78
Italy	63	68
South Korea	60	54
United Kingdom **	57	60
Cuba	52	62
Ukraine	46	39
Romania	40	53
Hungary	39	39
Netherlands	39	58

* Table sorted by points earned in Sydney 2000 Games.

** The United Kingdom competes as Great Britain in the Olympics.

TABLE 2

Country	Medal Points
USA	403
Russia	353
China	275
Australia	214
Germany	190
France	142
Italy	131
United Kingdom *	117
Cuba	114
Japan	114
South Korea	114
Netherlands	97
Romania	93
Ukraine	85
Hungary	78

* The United Kingdom competes as Great Britain in the Olympics.

TABLE 3

Country	Points per games per million residents*
Australia	5.236
Cuba	5.003
Hungary	3.917
Netherlands	2.927
Romania	2.087
Russia	1.248
South Korea	1.162
Germany	1.153
Italy	1.126
France	1.114
United Kingdom **	0.963
Ukraine	0.918
USA	0.669
Japan	0.447
China	0.104

* Formula: $MP / 2 / POP * 1,000,000$, where MP stands for medal points and POP stands for population.

** The United Kingdom competes as Great Britain in the Olympics.

Explaining Performance Gaps

Analysis

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will seek to explain discrepancies in performance at the summer and winter Olympic Games with reference to geographic and non-geographic factors.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Environment and Society

- Standard 15: The geographically informed person knows and understands how physical systems affect human systems.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 60–90 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#), particularly Land and Climate sections from [Italy](#) and [South Korea](#)

Medals tables from [Athens 2004](#) and [Turin 2006](#) Olympic Games

Converted medals tables (see below)

Excel or other spreadsheet program (optional)

Instructions

1. Show the students the final medals table from the 2006 Winter Games in [Turin](#). Ask them what they notice about the geography of the medal winners. If they don't, you could point out that only one country from the southern hemisphere—Australia—won a medal. You could also point out that six northern European countries with relatively small populations (10 million people or fewer) appear in the top 15: Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Estonia, Norway, and the Czech Republic.
2. Now show the students TABLE 1, which compares the performance of countries at the Turin 2006 and Athens 2004 games. Here's the breakdown of the columns:
 - Column 1: all countries that won medals at the Turin 2006 games
 - Column 2: medal points earned (three per gold medal, two per silver, one per bronze) at Turin 2006
 - Column 3: medal points adjusted to bring them into line with medal points earned at Athens 2004 (multiplied by 3.58, the ratio of events at Athens to events at Turin)
 - Column 4: medal points earned at Athens 2004 (see formula in Column 2)
 - Column 5: the ratio of winter medal points to summer medal points expressed as a percentagePoint out to the students that 13 of the 26 countries that won medals at Turin 2006 performed better there than they did at Athens 2004; the other 13 performed better at Athens 2004. Discuss what kinds of geographic generalizations, including those concerning latitude, can be made about the top and bottom halves of the table.
3. South Korea and Italy are located to the south of most of the other countries that won medals at the 2006 winter games. With reference to the Land and Climate sections of the CultureGrams texts for [Italy](#) and [South Korea](#), discuss what geographic factors might help account for these two countries' relative success at the winter games.
4. Poland, Slovakia, Belarus, and Ukraine are all northern European countries that might, based on their latitude, have been expected to perform better at the Winter Games than the Summer Games. Assuming Athens 2004 and Turin 2006 were not flukes, what *non-geographic* factors might explain their having done better at the Summer Games? Given that many winter sports require the purchase of expensive equipment (anything from skis to bobsleds), how might TABLE 2 stating per-capita GDP provide a partial answer?

Extension activity

Have students make a list of the countries that did not medal in the Turin 2006 games. Based on geographic and/or non-geographic factors that you can read about in [CultureGrams World Edition](#), pick five countries you believe might win something at the 2010 Games in Vancouver.

TABLE 1

Country	Points			Ratio (winter / summer)*
	Turin 06	Turin 06 (adj.)	Athens 04	
Finland	15	54	4	1350%
Switzerland	28	100	8	1250%
Austria	48	172	15	1147%
Estonia	9	32	4	800%
Canada	48	172	24	717%
Norway	31	111	16	694%
Sweden	30	107	17	629%
Croatia	7	25	9	278%
Germany	63	226	91	248%
Czech Republic	8	29	13	223%
Netherlands	17	61	39	156%
South Korea	26	93	60	155%
Italy	21	75	63	119%
France	17	61	64	95%
Russia	44	158	173	91%
USA	52	186	213	87%
Poland	3	11	18	61%
Slovakia	2	7	12	58%
Latvia	1	4	8	50%
China	19	68	144	47%
Bulgaria	2	7	17	41%
Belarus	2	7	25	28%
Ukraine	2	7	46	15%
Australia	4	14	99	14%
Japan	3	11	78	14%
United Kingdom **	2	7	57	12%

* Table sorted by winter/summer ratio.

** The United Kingdom competes as Great Britain in the Olympics.

TABLE 2

Country	Ratio (winter / summer)*	GDP per capita
Finland	1350%	\$32,153
Switzerland	1250%	\$35,633
Austria	1147%	\$33,700
Estonia	800%	\$15,478
Canada	717%	\$33,375
Norway	694%	\$41,420
Sweden	629%	\$32,525
Croatia	278%	\$13,042
Germany	248%	\$29,461
Czech Republic	223%	\$20,538
Netherlands	156%	\$32,684
South Korea	155%	\$22,029
Italy	119%	\$28,529
France	95%	\$30,386
Russia	91%	\$10,845
USA	87%	\$41,890
Poland	61%	\$13,847
Slovakia	58%	\$15,871
Latvia	50%	\$13,646
China	47%	\$6,757
Bulgaria	41%	\$9,032
Belarus	28%	\$7,918
Ukraine	15%	\$6,848
Japan	14%	\$31,267
Australia	14%	\$31,794
United Kingdom **	12%	\$33,238

* Table sorted by winter/summer ratio.

** The United Kingdom competes as Great Britain in the Olympics.

Olympic Boycotts

Activity

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will learn about the issues surrounding Olympic boycotts and participate in a mock UN debate.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Power, Authority, & Governance

- Standard A [High School]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of *power, authority, and governance*, so that the learner can examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual (or individual nation) in relation to the general welfare.
- Standard C [High School]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of *power, authority, and governance*, so that the learner can analyze and explain ideas and mechanisms to meet needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, establish order and security, and balance competing conceptions of a just society.
- Standard F [High School]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of *power, authority, and governance*, so that the learner can analyze and evaluate conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

National Standards for Geography

Human Systems

- Standard 11: The geographically informed person knows and understands the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.
- Standard 13: The geographically informed person knows and understands how forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 1 hour and 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 20 minutes, two different days; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)

[United Nations web site](http://www.un.org/aboutun/) (<http://www.un.org/aboutun/>)

News articles on controversies surrounding the Olympic Games

Instructions

1. Introduce students to the history and functions of the United Nations. You may want to access information from the [United Nations web site](http://www.un.org/aboutun/) (<http://www.un.org/aboutun/>). As a class, discuss the role of the United Nations in conflict resolution. What forums are available to address disputes between nations?
2. Ask students to research the motivations behind countries' decisions to boycott Olympic Games (e.g., the 1980 and 1984 Games). Have the students each bring in at least one news article about a controversy surrounding the 2008 Games in Beijing (e.g., Tibetan independence and the violence in Darfur). Comprehensive information on Darfur is available at ProQuest's [World Conflicts Today](http://www.worldconflictstoday.com) (www.worldconflictstoday.com). Discuss why a country might choose to boycott the 2008 Games or use the Olympics to highlight political issues.
3. Assign each student a different country to represent in a mock UN Security Council. Students should read the CultureGrams report of the country they represent so that they can support their country's interests in a debate.
4. Pick a topic to be debated at the Security Council meeting, such as Tibetan autonomy or how to end the conflict in Darfur. Have students representing the member countries debate the different sides of the issue. After all the presentations have been given, have the students vote on the topics. They should be able to explain the rationale for their decisions to the class.

Grades K–5

Flag Creation

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students discuss the symbolism and meaning of various national flags and then create flags to represent themselves.

McREL Arts Standards

Visual Arts

- Standard 3: Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts.
 - Level II [Grades K–4] Benchmark 2: Knows how subject matter, symbols, and ideas are used to communicate meaning.
- Standard 5: Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others.
 - Level II [Grades K–4] Benchmark 1: Knows various purposes for creating works of visual art.

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#)

Art materials—construction paper, scissors, glue, pens, etc.

Instructions

1. Introduce the concept of flags as works of art that use color, design, and symbols to convey meaning. Refer to some of the flags on the bottom right of the main webpage for each country. The accompanying descriptions offer interpretations for the flag's symbols. For example, in the [flag of South Africa](#), the colors symbolize the unity of the nation's races. In the [flag of the United Kingdom](#), the crosses represent England, Scotland, and Ireland. In the [flag of Greece](#), the cross symbolizes the Greek Orthodox Church.
2. Using the [Flag Gallery](#), print a flag outline for each student. Have the students color in the flag and present it to the class.
3. Assign students to create a unique flag representing themselves, their family, or their city, state, or country of birth. Encourage them to find colors and symbols that stand for something important to them.
4. Have students display their flags for the class and explain their use of color, symbolism, and design.

Extension Activity

Have the students work together to design a flag that represents their class. Place it prominently in the classroom.

Fractions and Food

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will practice multiplying and dividing fractions in a real-world context.

National curriculum standard(s)

Principles and Standards for School Mathematics

- Problem Solving Standard [Grade 3–5]: Instructional programs from prekindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to solve problems that arise in mathematics and in other contexts.
- Number and Operations Standard: Instructional programs from prekindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems.
 - [Grade 3–5]: All students should develop an understanding of fractions as parts of unit wholes, as parts of a collection, as locations on number lines, and as divisions of whole numbers.

Developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Time requirement

Preparation: 20 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Recipe Collection](#)

Instructions

1. Tell your students that they are chefs for the president of the United States. They are in charge of preparing the menu for an upcoming dinner, which will be attended by diplomats from all over the world. The president would like to serve all the diplomats dishes from their own countries.
2. Assign each student to pick a different country to be in charge of. After the students have had a chance to look up the recipes for their country, which are found in the Online CultureGrams [Recipe Collection](#), tell them that they will need to double the recipes for the main and side dishes in order to feed all of the diplomats. Explain to the students that they will need to triple the dessert recipes, though, because the diplomats have a sweet tooth. They should pay special attention to doubling and tripling the fractions in the recipes.
3. When the students are done with their calculations, tell them that you have just received a memo from the White House saying that due to unexpected events, the dinner has been postponed and as a result several diplomats will not be able to attend. The students now need to halve the original recipes for main and side dishes and—as several diplomats have lately decided to go on a diet—quarter the dessert recipes.
4. Have students check their fractions against each other's recipes to make sure their calculations are correct and that they will turn out delicious on the big night!

Extension activity

Being able to multiply and divide fractions is not the only math skill good cooks need. They also need to know how to convert metric measurements to English ones, especially if they're making international recipes. After teaching the students a few conversion formulas, have them practice converting a series of measurements.

Geography Bee

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn state or country locations, capitals, and physical features.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Geography Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 2: Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment.
 - Level II [Grade 3–5] Benchmark 2: Knows the location of major cities in North America.
 - Level II [Grade 3–5] Benchmark 3: Knows the approximate location of major continents, mountain ranges, and bodies of water on Earth.

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 15 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, two different days; less if part is assigned as homework.

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#) or [States Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Divide the class into several groups. Give each group a list of countries/states they are to study. (You may split up the world/United States however you wish.)
2. Assign students to read and take notes on the Land and Climate sections and the maps of their assigned countries in the CultureGrams Kids Edition. Or, if your class is focusing on states, assign students to read and take notes on the Climate and Geography sections and the detail maps in the CultureGrams States Edition. Instruct students to pay particular attention to the:
 - Location (borders)
 - Capital city
 - Major physical features (e.g., lakes, mountains, etc.)
3. Compile the notes the class has taken into one master list. Include only the most significant physical features. Have the students memorize this list, using group work, flashcards, etc.
4. After the students have had a chance to memorize elements from the list, test their knowledge by playing “Around the World.” To play, Student A stands next to the desk behind him or her. A geographic question is posed to both Student A and Student B. If Student A answers the question correctly before student B, he or she moves on to the next desk, where another question is posed to student A and student C. If, however, Student B beats Student A, Student A sits down in Student B’s desk and Student B moves on to challenge Student C. This process continues until one student is able to move throughout all of the desks in the classroom—that is, “around the world.”

Extension activity

Discuss with the students the various elements that make up a map, including a key and typical symbols used to denote mountain ranges, bodies of water, capitals, etc. Then, using printouts of either the political map of the United States from the States Edition or maps of world regions from the World Edition (both in PDF formats), have students fill in capitals and significant physical features using the symbols you have discussed. You may have students do this from memory or using reference materials.

How Communities Change

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will look at several countries to see factors that shape how a community begins and changes.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 9: Understands the nature, distribution and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 4: Knows the causes and effects of human migration (e.g., European colonists and African slaves to America, movement of people from drought areas in Africa, movement of people from East Asia to North America, effects of physical geography on national and international migration, cultural factors).
- Standard 12: Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Knows the settlement patterns that characterize the development of a community or state (e.g., from the movement of people into an area previously unoccupied to the competition among villages for economic dominance and growth; from a small number of dispersed settlers with few services to the modern pattern of suburbanization and decentralization).

Environment and Society

- Standard 15: Understands how physical systems affect human systems.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Knows the ways in which human activities are constrained by the physical environment (e.g., effects of weather, climate and land forms on agriculture, recreational activities, availability of water, expansion of settlement).
- Standard 16: Understands the changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 6: Knows the different ways in which resources are used and valued in different regions of the world (e.g., the use of wood in the United States for construction compared to the use of wood in the Dominican Republic for fuel).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 9: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.
- Standard 12: The geographically informed person knows and understands the process, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Environment and Society

- Standard 15: The geographically informed person knows and understands how physical systems affect human systems.
- Standard 16: The geographically informed person knows and understands the changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#)

Butcher paper

Instructions

1. In preparation, read through two or three countries in the CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#) (choose countries from different regions and climates), noting factors like location (e.g., island, land-locked, region, etc.), climate (Mediterranean, tropical, desert), history (native inhabitants, colonization, migration, etc.), culture (religion, customs), and natural resources (forests, water, agriculture) that shape how a community begins and develops.
2. Have students read the CultureGrams Kids Edition texts for the countries you have chosen. Ask students to think, as they read, about why people might have wanted to settle in those particular places.
3. As a class or in groups, make a list of the factors (for each country) that contribute to the establishment of the community. Discuss the differences. What factors seem the most important?
4. As a means of discussing what factors make communities grow and change, have students draw a map of their own community on butcher paper. Instruct each student or group of students to identify important features (land, bodies of water, other communities or cities nearby, schools, business and agricultural districts, etc.). Display the completed map and its features, and discuss what factors influence how or whether a community grows. Compare what students learn about influences on their community with influences in other communities. What factors are the same? What factors are different?

Extension activity

Have students listen to the news or get help looking through a newspaper to find examples of events that are changing their community. Assign the students to prepare a short presentation to share their events with the class.

Moveable Timeline

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will be able to place important events and periods from their state's history in chronological order.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for History (K–4)

The History of Students' Own State or Region

- Standard 3: The people, events, problems, and ideas that created the history of their state.
 - D. The student understands the interactions among [various] groups throughout the history of his or her state.
 - [Grade 3–4]: Therefore, the student is able to list in chronological order the major historical events that are part of the state's history.

Developed by the National Center for History in the Schools

Time requirement

Preparation: 20 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [States Edition](#)

Posters

Drawing utensils

Instructions

1. Have the students study their state's timeline, available from the States Edition.
2. Divide the students into groups according to the number of entries on the timeline. Give each group a poster, and instruct students to make a creative representation of their assigned event from the timeline by drawing illustrations. They may write down the name of the event, but *not* the date itself.
3. On the chalkboard, draw a horizontal line that has all of the dates indicated from the States Edition timeline, but none of the events. Collect all the posters and mix them up.
4. Divide the class into two groups, Group A and Group B. Hold up two posters and ask the Group A to place them in chronological order in relation to each other. (Note that they don't need to know the exact date of the event.) If they do so correctly, they get a point. Attach the posters to the correct dates on the board. Move on to Group B, this time holding up one poster. In order to get a point, Group B must correctly place the poster in relation to the two posters on the board. Continue until all of the posters are placed correctly on the timeline. The group with the most points wins.

Questions for further discussion

1. If the students had to characterize each century on the state's timeline, how would they do it? (i.e. centuries of exploration, settlement, development, etc.)
2. Which events do the students think were the most important in forming the state that we live in today and why? Which ones have they heard of before or celebrate in some way?

Extension activity

Outside of class, have each group research their timeline event in more depth, so that they are able to write at least a couple of paragraphs about it. Include these paragraphs on their posters, and hang them in the classroom as a permanent display on one of the walls.

Race Around the World

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn about three to five selected countries in preparation for a class “race.”

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Geography Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 2: Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Knows the approximate location of major continents, mountain ranges, and bodies of water on Earth.

Human Systems

- Standard 10: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 1: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions (e.g., in terms of environment and resources, technology, food, shelter, social organization, beliefs and customs, schooling, what girls and boys are allowed to do).
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Understands how cultures differ in their use of similar environments and resources (e.g., comparing how people live in Phoenix, Arizona with how people live in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

National Geography Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 2: The geographically informed person knows and understands how to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments.

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard E [Early Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes, if reading is done as homework

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Select four or five countries you would like the students to study as a class. Then have the students read the [Kids Edition](#) report for those countries. This may be done during class time or as homework assignments, spread out over several days.
2. Have each student create quiz questions about his or her country based on the reading. The students should not make the questions too difficult, as the questions may be asked of members of their own team during the upcoming Race Around the World activity.
3. Compile the questions together and distribute them to the class. You may wish to have some as “questions of the day” in the lead-up to the activity.

4. Mark a number of cities as “pit stops” on a world map. The students’ hometown should be the first and final pit stop.
5. For the Race Around the World, divide the students into teams. Each team should be represented by a symbol on the world map (e.g., different-colored airplanes). In turn, ask each team a question from those the class has submitted. With each correct answer, the team’s marker should be moved to the next “pit stop” on the map. The first team to travel around the globe to the original destination wins the game.

Extension activity

Compare the “route” the students traveled in their Race Around the World to some of the routes taken by early explorers around the globe (e.g., Magellan, Drake, Cook). How long did it take these explorers to complete their routes? How long would the students’ route take by airplane?

The World Game

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will develop basic map skills and learn about the worldwide appeal of soccer.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Geography Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

Standard 2: Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment.

- o Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Knows the approximate location of major continents, mountain ranges, and bodies of water on Earth.

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 2: The geographically informed person knows and understands how to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#)

CultureGrams Online World Edition regional maps:

- [North America](#)
- [South America](#)
- [Europe](#)
- [Africa](#)
- [Asia](#)
- [Oceania](#)

Instructions

1. Divide the class into four groups, and assign each group one of four regions:
 - 1) North and South America
 - 2) Europe
 - 3) Africa
 - 4) Asia and Oceania
2. For each region, print out a list of the countries available in the Kids Edition. Have each group locate these countries on the regional maps (listed above).
3. Have students access the “Games and Sports” page for each country on their list. Have them determine in which countries soccer is played and highlight these countries on their regional maps. What number or percentage of the countries on their lists play soccer?
4. As a class, discuss their findings. Explore some reasons why soccer is such a popular sport around the globe (inexpensive to play, introduced by colonial powers, etc.).
5. During an international soccer competition (e.g., World Cup, UEFA European Championship, Africa’s Cup of Nations) assign each student a country to follow during the competition. Use the success of particular teams to launch a discussion about those countries. Internet sites that may be useful include:
 - [International Football Federation](http://www.fifa.com) (FIFA) <http://www.fifa.com>
 - [Union of European Football Associations](http://www.uefa.com/index.html) <http://www.uefa.com/index.html>
 - [U.S. Soccer Federation](http://www.ussoccer.com) <http://www.ussoccer.com>

Understanding Election Results

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn about the Electoral College while understanding the numerical basis for election results and practicing various computations.

National curriculum standard(s)

Principles and Standards for School Mathematics

- Data Analysis and Probability Standard: Instructional programs from prekindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them.
 - [Grade 3–5]: All students should design investigations to address a question and consider how data-collection methods affect the nature of the data set.
- Number and Operations Standard: Instructional programs from prekindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to compute fluently and make reasonable estimates.
 - [Grade 3–5]: All students should develop and use strategies to estimate the results of whole-number computations and to judge the reasonableness of such results
- Connections Standard [Grade 3–5]: instructional programs from prekindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to recognize and apply mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics.

Developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 2 hours, two different days; less, if some is done as homework.

Materials

CultureGrams [States Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Begin by handing out a printout of the [PDF outline map of the U.S.](#) to each student, along with coloring utensils. Give the students a list of which states voted for George W. Bush (color red) in the 2004 presidential election and which states voted for John Kerry (color blue) and have them color in the map accordingly.
2. When the students are done, tell them that the country was split fairly evenly in this election, with 51% of the nation voting for Bush and 48% voting for Kerry. Yet, from looking at the amount of red on the election map, they might think that far more people voted for Bush. Talk about how the Electoral College works, explaining that each state gets a number of electoral votes based on its total number of senators and representatives, the latter of which is based on population.
3. Using this formula (senators + representatives), have the students use the information in the Government section of the CultureGrams States Edition to fill in their map with the numbers of electoral votes each state has. Compare the sum of the blue states' electoral votes and those of the red states. Are they closer than the map makes them appear?
4. Explain to students that, typically, it is thought that states which are home to large urban populations (and are therefore more densely populated) tend to be democrat, while those home to rural populations (and therefore more sparsely populated) tend to be republican. Have students test this assumption using the Create Your Own Table function in the States Edition. Have students create tables that display the population densities (population per sq. mi.) for both red and blue states. Using this data, have them create and compare averages for each group. What do their findings prove?

Questions for further discussion

1. Why might more densely populated states vote democratic, while more sparsely populated ones vote republican?
2. The Electoral College has come under fire as being out of date and unfair. Do the students agree? Why or why not?

Extension activity

Provide electoral maps for several past presidential elections. As they compare the maps, they should note which states should be classified as “swing states”; that is, which states alternate between voting for republican and democratic candidates. Then, have the students make a chart, which visually displays red, blue, and swing states. The students bring their charts to class and compare them. If there are any differences, allow students to defend their classifications.

Where Should We Go on Vacation?

Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will gain a better sense of audience, visual rhetoric, and persuasive strategies, while comparing and contrasting South American countries.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Language Arts Standards

Listening and Speaking

- Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.
 - Level II [Grade 3–5] Benchmark 7: Makes basic oral presentations to class (e.g., uses subject-related information and vocabulary; includes content appropriate to the audience; relates ideas and observations; incorporates visual aids or props; incorporates several sources of information).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 20 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 40 minutes, two different days (making the brochure is assigned as homework)

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#) or [Kids Edition](#):

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Chile
- Peru

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Photo Gallery](#)

Instructions

1. Introduce the lesson by explaining that countries try to attract tourists due to the money they bring in. Discuss the different ways a country might sell itself (i.e., beautiful beaches, friendly people, economic lodging, famous landmarks, unique cuisine, etc.). Then discuss which of these characteristics would appeal to various age groups.
2. Divide students into four groups and assign each group to represent a tourist board of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru (this lesson can be adapted to work for any region of the world).
3. Have each group read the CultureGrams (World Edition or Kids Edition) report for their respective country and prepare a travel brochure in which they try to persuade tourists to come to their country for a visit. They may use the pictures from the CultureGrams online photo gallery and find other online sources to get more information on their country.
4. Assign the students to make their brochures for homework. The brochures should contain information that would bring tourists to the country and should be specifically aimed at others their age. Also as homework, have students prepare a presentation to give in class on their country.
5. The students then share their visual with the class in a 10-minute oral presentation.

Questions for further discussion

1. Which group's presentation was the most convincing to each student and why?
2. How did each group's visual (brochure or presentation) target a specific audience?

Extension activity

Lead a follow-up discussion on how these four South American countries are similar and how they are different. The class can also explore some of the reasons for these similarities and differences—geography, history, economy, government, etc.

A Look at Haiti

Discussion

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students use text and photos to identify cultural characteristics of Haiti.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 1: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions (e.g., in terms of environment and resources, technology, food, shelter, social organization, beliefs and customs, schooling, what girls and boys are allowed to do).
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Understands how cultures differ in their use of similar environments and resources (e.g., comparing how people live in Phoenix, Arizona with how people live in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard E [Early Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity, so that the learner can give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition—Haiti](#)

CultureGrams [Photo Gallery—Haiti](#)

Instructions

1. Have students read the [Kids Edition report for Haiti](#). As they read, they should create a list of five characteristics of Haiti (e.g., speak Creole, eat a lot of beans and rice, may practice voodoo, enjoy storytelling, etc.). As a class, discuss some of these findings.
2. Have students access the [Haiti photos](#) in the CultureGrams Photo Gallery. Each of these photos portrays Haitians doing everyday things. Have each student pick a photo and write a short paragraph about the person pictured. (You may choose to have all the students write about the same photo.) Have the students describe what the person is doing in the photo, but also have them imagine what isn't pictured—the other activities the person might carry out in a typical day. Encourage them to use their list of five cultural characteristics as background.
3. Form the students into groups so that all of the students that commented on a particular photo are together. Have the students compare their paragraphs. Did some students have a different idea of what the pictured person's day might be like?

Extension activity

Based on the photos and their reading, have the students write a short essay about what challenges their pictured Haitian might have if he or she moved to the students' hometown? Also, what challenges would the student have if he or she moved to Haiti?

Comparing Living Conditions

Discussion

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students use photos and statistical graphs and tables to compare living conditions between Burundi, India, Malawi, and the United States.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Health Standards

Health

Standard 2: Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health.

- o Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 1: Knows how the physical environment can impact personal health (e.g., the effects of exposure to pollutants).
- o Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Knows how personal health can be influenced by society (e.g., culture) and science (e.g., technology).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

McREL Geography Standards

Human Systems

Standard 10: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

- o Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 1: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions (e.g., in terms of environment and resources, technology, food, shelter, social organization, beliefs and customs, schooling, what girls and boys are allowed to do).
- o Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Understands how cultures differ in their use of similar environments and resources (e.g., comparing how people live in Phoenix, Arizona with how people live in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [Concepts and Terminology](#)

CultureGrams Online Edition [Comparison Table](#) and [Comparison Graphs](#)

CultureGrams [Photo Gallery](#)

Instructions

1. Explain the concept of life expectancy to the students. An overview is provided on the CultureGrams [Concepts and Terminology](#) page. Emphasize that life expectancy figures indicate the overall health of a population and whether the people have access to nutritious food, clean water, health care, and proper sanitation.
2. Have students access the World Edition [Comparison Table](#). Instruct the student to select Malawi, Burundi, and India, as well as the United States (or their home country if not the United States) for the countries. For the categories, have students select Life Expectancy (Female) and Life Expectancy (Male).
3. Alternatively, have students access the World Edition [Comparison Graphs](#). Instruct the students to select the same countries and generate graphs for life expectancy and the other statistics under the "Health" category.

4. Lead a discussion on what these figures reveal. Which country has the highest life expectancy? Which has the lowest? What factors could cause people in Burundi to die more than 30 years earlier than in the United States? Why do people in the United States have such a low probability of dying before they reach age 40?
5. Have students access the CultureGrams [Photo Gallery](#) with photos of the Malawi, Burundi, and India that relate to health and living conditions in those countries. For example:

Malawi:	Burundi:	India:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cooking <i>Nsima</i>" • "Preparing Goat Stew" • "Carrying Water" • "Women Washing Clothes" • "Woman Carrying Water" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Collecting Water" • "Water Source" • "Heavy Rains" • "Thatch-roofed Kitchen" • "Typical House" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Shower Sink" • "Steps of the Ganges River" • "River Washing"

6. Lead a discussion about what the photos reveal. Where are people doing their washing? What does their drinking water look like? What does their housing look like? How are these things different in the United States? How might they impact the life expectancy figures? Have student write a short paper on what they discovered.

National Symbols

Discussion

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students use compare national symbols from different countries and discuss how these symbols reflect the nations' values.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Introduce the concept of the national symbol. Ask students to name several U.S. national symbols (e.g., U.S. flag, the bald eagle, U.S. coins or currency, the White House, famous presidents such as Washington or Lincoln, etc.). Discuss what each U.S. symbol means and why the things they represent are important (give short historical background, as necessary). Ask students what they value personally and what people in the United States value as a society.
2. Discuss why national symbols, and traditions that include national symbols, should be given respect. Mention specific ways respect can be shown (removing a hat during a flag ceremony, or not hurting a bald eagle, etc.).
3. Using the CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#), show or describe some examples of other nations' national symbols. These are located on the bottom right of the main webpage for each country. For example:
 - a. the kiwi of [New Zealand](#)
 - b. the gaucho of [Argentina](#)
 - c. the panda of [China](#)
 - d. the *dharma chakra* of [India](#),
 - e. the Parthenon of [Greece](#)

You may also want to refer to the symbols in the different nations' flags.

4. Assign each student a country in the Kids Edition. Have each student read that nation's report and give a short presentation to the class on their country's national symbol. Have them explain what the symbol says about what the nation values.

Extension Activity

Have each student draw a symbol (or symbols) to represent themselves. Have them describe their selections to the class.

Tanzanian Life

Discussion

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will analyze photographs to identify differences between Tanzanian and North American cultures.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 1: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions (e.g., in terms of environment and resources, technology, food, shelter, social organization, beliefs and customs, schooling, what girls and boys are allowed to do).
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 3: Understands how cultures differ in their use of similar environments and resources (e.g., comparing how people live in Phoenix, Arizona with how people live in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [Early Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture.
- Standard E [Early Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition—Tanzania](#)

CultureGrams [Photo Gallery—Tanzania](#)

Instructions

1. Have the students access the [photos of Tanzania](#) in the Photo Gallery. Ask the students to write down their responses to questions about each photo you select. Have them identify some of the differences between life in Tanzania and North America. How do shopping, weddings, clothing, food, and work in Tanzania contrast with those aspects of their own families' lives? For example:
 - a. "Shopkeeper" – How does this shop differ from a North American shop? How much selection does the shopkeeper appear to have?
 - b. "Zanzibari Bride" – How has this bride prepared for her wedding? Are there differences with how people prepare for weddings in North America? Are there similarities?
 - c. "Wedding Preparations" – How is this woman preparing the food for the wedding celebration? Is it more difficult than preparing food in a North American kitchen? How is the woman dressed?
 - d. "Seaweed Farming" – What does this woman do for a living? How does her work appear to be?

- e. "Village Nurses" – What are these women eating for lunch? How does the way they eat differ from how a group of North Americans would eat?
2. As a class, discuss some of the students' findings. What did they find surprising about Tanzania?
3. Then, have the students read the Lifestyle section of the [Tanzania report](#) in the CultureGrams Kids Edition. This section includes information on Games and Sports, Holidays, Food, Schools, and Life as a Kid. From their reading, have students identify at least three aspects of life in Tanzania that are different to their own life. Also have them identify three similarities. Ask the students if they can find in the text any of the characteristics of Tanzania they identified in the photos.

Extension Activity

Based on the photos and their reading, have the students write a short essay about whether they would like to live in Tanzania? Why or why not? What aspects of Tanzanian culture would they find most difficult getting used to? What would they enjoy the most?

What Is the American West?

Discussion and Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn about the geographic similarities and differences among the western states of the United States and draw a physical map of the region.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 1: The geographically informed person knows and understands how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information.

Places and Regions

- Standard 4: The geographically informed person knows and understands the physical and human characteristics of places.

Environment and Society

- Standard 15: The geographically informed person knows and understands how physical systems affect human systems.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 1 hour and 30 minutes

In-class: Up to 1 hour and 30 minutes, depending on the number of passages read and clips shown

Materials

CultureGrams [States Edition](#):

- [Arizona](#)
- [California](#)
- [Colorado](#)
- [Idaho](#)
- [Oregon](#)
- [Montana](#)
- [New Mexico](#)
- [Nevada](#)
- [Texas](#)
- [Utah](#)
- [Washington](#)
- [Wyoming](#)
- United States ([outline map](#))

Instructions

1. Assign students to read the CultureGrams reports for the western states listed above.
2. In class, read passages from novels and/or show clips from films that portray the West in stereotypical ways—such as depictions of cowboys, Native Americans, gunfights, mountain men, cattle drives, saloons, etc. There are several books and movies you could use (many are both), including *Shane*, *Riders of the Purple Sage*, *Lonesome Dove*, *O Pioneers*, *The Shootist!*, *High Noon*, *The Virginian*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *Lone Ranger*, *Gunsmoke*, etc.
3. Lead a discussion prompting the students to compare and contrast the West as it is commonly portrayed in literature and film with the West as it is portrayed in history and the present-day reality, which they read about in the CultureGrams reports. What similarities do the Western states share? How are they different?
4. Talk with the students about the importance of Western geography—the rugged frontier, wide open spaces, the climate, natural resources, limited water, etc. Using the outline map of the United States, accessible from the [States Edition](#) have the students create their own physical maps of the West.

Questions for further discussion

1. When Europeans first arrived in the United States, they considered anything west of the Mississippi to be part of the frontier that was the “West.” As settlers spread out across the United States, the boundary of that frontier changed. What does this history tell the class about the way the West has been classified? Is it more than a geographic location?

2. Since the majority of the western United States is composed of desert, water is scarce in most western states. Do the students think that fewer people should live in these states or that water should be shipped in from other regions of the country? Should the amount of water the inhabitants of these states use be limited?

Extension activity

Hawaii and Alaska aren't typically thought of as being part of the West, even though they are both west of California. Have a class debate in which one half argues that Alaska should be classified as part of the West and the other half argues that Hawaii should be. Students may justify their reasons by drawing upon the stereotypes discussed or the historical and current-day information they read about in the CultureGrams reports.

World Religions

Presentation

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn about three of the world's major religions as practiced in India, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.
 - Level II [Grades 3–5] Benchmark 1: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions (e.g., in terms of environment and resources, technology, food, shelter, social organization, beliefs and customs, schooling, what girls and boys are allowed to do).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard E [Early Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#) and [Kids Edition](#):

- India
- Saudi Arabia
- Thailand

Instructions

1. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group to research one of the following religions and have them read the appropriate CultureGrams report for that religion:

Religion	Country report	Section
Islam	Saudi Arabia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Five Pillars of Islam (Kids Edition)▪ Religion (World Edition)
Hinduism	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hinduism (Kids Edition)▪ Religion (World Edition)
Buddhism	Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Buddhism (Kids Edition)▪ Religion (World Edition)

2. As they read, students should take notes, listing the major aspects of the assigned religion. Group members should prepare a brief presentation on the religion to give to the class. Each student in the group should present one of the aspects they discovered.

I'm Famous!

Research Project and Presentation

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn about prominent people from around the world while practicing research and presentation skills.

National curriculum standard(s)

Standards for the English Language Arts

- Standard 8: Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association

Time requirement

Preparation: 15 minutes

In-class: 3 hours, over the course of several days

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#)

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Famous People](#)

Outside research sources

Instructions

1. Using the online version of the CultureGrams Kids Edition, allow students to pick a country they are interested in. Then have them access the Famous People section for that country and choose a person they'd like to do more research on.
2. Using the Famous People entry as a basis, have the students carry out further research on their selected person. Some students may be required to use online sources to find out more about their famous person.
3. Assign students to write a short paper on their famous person and to put together a presentation for the class. Have them also dress up as their famous person and, if possible, share a sample of the music, writing, art, etc. that made that person famous.
4. During these presentations (which might span a few days), have students take notes and quiz them at the end on some of the most important points presented.

Questions for further discussion

1. Ask students how many of these famous people they had heard of before. Why do they think so many of them were new names for them? How familiar do they think students in other countries are with U.S. American celebrities?
2. What types of problems did students run into during the research process? What sources did they find the most helpful? What are the characteristics of a reliable online source?

Extension activity

Talk about the different ways of presenting information about a real person, whether in a research paper, biography, or a story. Assign students to take their research paper about a famous person and rewrite it (either in the first or third person) in the form of a story based on facts. After reading the finished products, choose a few especially noteworthy stories to share with the class as a whole. Or, put all of the stories together in a class book to display.

Oral Literature

Research and Writing

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will understand the role of oral literature, in other cultures and their own.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [Early Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#):

- [Senegal](#)
- [The Gambia](#)
- [Azerbaijan](#)
- [Marshall Islands](#)
- [Mongolia](#)
- [Somalia](#)
- [Yemen](#)

Instructions

1. Explain to students that literature is still transmitted orally in many cultures. For example, in West African societies, the *griot* has the respected function of maintaining and reciting histories and genealogies. But the oral tradition is not limited to that region alone.
2. Using the CultureGrams World Edition, ask students to read “The Arts” sections of the Senegal and The Gambia reports to learn about the role of the *griot*. Then have them compare this oral tradition to that of other countries by assigning them “The Arts” sections of Azerbaijan, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Somalia, and Yemen. Lead a class discussion about the similarities and differences between the cultures. How is the oral tradition similar? Are there notable differences? Is there an oral tradition in our own culture?
3. Have the students individually read a folktale to themselves, silently. Then, read the folktale aloud to the students. Afterwards, discuss how listening to a story provides a different experience than reading it. Have the students identify what those differences are.
4. For homework, have the students find pieces of folklore from their own families or culture. Or, have them find folklore from other sources (e.g., other families, books at the library on other countries, etc.). Ask them to bring to class examples of the folklore they learned about and talk about them or recite portions, if possible.

Extension activity

Ask the students to create their own folktale. Or, have them take an existing folktale and provide an alternative ending. Students could share folktales in class.

A Kid's Life

Writing Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn that all cultures have value while learning to write an imaginative narrative.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Language Arts Standards

Writing

- Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
 - Level II [Grade 3–5] Benchmark 8: Writes narrative accounts, such as poems and stories (e.g., establishes a context that enables the reader to imagine the event or experience; develops characters, setting, and plot; creates an organizing structure; sequences events; uses concrete sensory details; uses strategies such as dialogue, tension, and suspense; uses an identifiable voice).
 - Level II [Grade 3–5] Benchmark 10: Writes expressive compositions (e.g., expresses ideas, reflections, and observations; uses an individual, authentic voice; uses narrative strategies, relevant details, and ideas that enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, less if writing is done at home.

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#):

- [Haiti](#)
- [Mexico](#)
- [Hungary](#)
- [Senegal](#)
- [Tanzania](#)
- [China](#)
- [Singapore](#)

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Photo Gallery](#)

Instructions

1. Assign each student to read a selected Kids Edition CultureGrams report from one of the above countries. The students should pay particular attention to categories dealing with daily life in another country—Land and Climate, Games and Sports, Food, Life as a Kid, Schools, Getting Around, etc.
2. Have each student browse through his or her assigned country's photo album from the CultureGrams Online Edition. Instruct students to focus especially on those pictures that display people, activities, food, and living conditions.
3. Assign students to write a short story in which they imagine what their life might be like if they lived in their assigned country. They could write about an ordinary day, a holiday, or a social event of some kind. Some of the information of their stories may be taken from the CultureGrams report and the pictures, but students should also be encouraged to use their imaginations in deciding what life in the foreign country might be like.
4. Put the students in groups according to country. Have them read their stories to each other and talk about the similarities and differences they notice.

Questions for further discussion

1. In what ways would the students' lives be similar or different if they lived somewhere else? What aspects of the country they read about seemed most appealing and which seemed the most challenging?

2. Are there similarities that all cultures share? (i.e., basic human needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, etc.; holiday celebrations; importance of familial relationships; etc.)
3. In which ways do factors such as geography, climate, economy, language, and history shape different worldviews?

Extension activity

Using one of the many online sources available, find pen pals for your students, preferably from the country they wrote their story on. In one of their letters or emails, have students ask their pen pals what a typical day is like where they live and share what their days are like in the United States.

Collaborative CultureGram

Writing Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will practice collaboration while learning more about their home state or city.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Life Skills Standards

Working with Others

- Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group.
 - Level IV [Grade K–12] Benchmark 2: Works cooperatively within a group to complete tasks, achieve goals, and solve problems.

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, two different days

Materials

CultureGrams [Kids Edition](#)

Painting/drawing materials

Instructions

1. Organize students into groups of four to five members. Assign each group to collaboratively write a CultureGrams report for the students' home state or city, depending on the emphasis of your class. The groups should use the same categories as in the Kids Edition texts, though the categories can be modified depending on the students' interests and abilities. The students may draw on information you have presented in class or do their own research.
2. Group members will be responsible for dividing up tasks, gathering information, writing the text, revising the initial drafts, and compiling the finished project into a unified whole.
3. Once the text portions are finished, assign the students to illustrate the texts with pictures that they draw or paint.
4. Have groups show their CultureGrams reports to the rest of the class. Or post the student-created CultureGrams reports for everyone to see.

Questions for further discussion

1. What was the hardest category for students to write and why?
2. Ask the students what they learned about their state or city in the process of making this CultureGrams report. Did they have to leave out some information due to space constraints? If so, how did they decide on which information to include?

Extension activity

Discuss the collaborative process with students. For example, talk about the experience of writing a paper as a group, how they made decisions, how they dealt with differences of opinion, etc.

Cultures in Conflict

Writing Activity

Grade level

K–5

Objective

Students will learn about historical interactions between Native Americans and European settlers, as well as contemporary cultural clashes.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for U.S. History

Era 1: Three Worlds Meet (Beginnings to 1620)

- Standard 1: Comparative characteristics of societies in the Americas, Western Europe, and Western Africa that increasingly interacted after 1450.
 - The student understands the differences and similarities among Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans who converged in the western hemisphere after 1492.
 - [Grade 5–12]: Therefore, the student is able to compare social organizations, including population levels, urbanization, family structure, and modes of communication.
 - [Grade 5–12]: The student is also able to compare dominant ideas and values including religious belief and practice, gender roles, and attitudes toward nature.

Developed by the National Center for History in the Schools

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [States Edition](#):

- [Arizona](#)
- [Colorado](#)
- [Delaware](#)
- [Florida](#)
- [Idaho](#)
- [Illinois](#)
- [Indiana](#)
- [Iowa](#)
- [Massachusetts](#)
- [Montana](#)
- [New Mexico](#)
- [Oregon](#)
- [Tennessee](#)
- [Utah](#)

Instructions

1. Divide students into groups of four to five people. Assign each group to survey the early history sections of the States Edition. Instruct the students to look for patterns in the development of the “New World.” The groups should look at sections dealing with Native American inhabitants, the interaction between Native Americans and whites, the exploration of the American frontier, etc.
2. As they are reading, ask the groups to compile a list of the factors that generally led to conflict between Native American inhabitants and white explorers and settlers. These could include cultural and religious differences, common threats to survival, competing interests in land and natural resources, etc.
3. Lead a class discussion about the relationships generally between Native Americans and white settlers in U.S. history. Was conflict inevitable? Why do people have trouble accepting others who are different? What could have been done to reduce the negative effects of conflict?
4. Assign students to write a paper describing what factors generally led to conflict between Native American inhabitants and white settlers. The paper should also identify and discuss a contemporary conflict where there are similar causal factors. For example, you might discuss Palestinian and Israeli claims to the same land or religious differences that influence the conflict in Northern Ireland. (For background reading on several contemporary conflicts, see ProQuest’s [World Conflicts Today](#) at [www.worldconflictstoday.com](#)).

Discussion questions

1. Ask students if they saw any application from this lesson in their lives today. What are some of the things that cause conflicts between students and their friends or family members?
2. How has the United States tried to be a home for many different groups of people, including Native Americans and immigrants from different countries? How well do you think it has succeeded?

Extension activity

Divide the students into two groups—Native Americans and white settlers—for the purpose of planning and participating in role-plays that dramatize the historical relationships between whites and Native Americans in the U.S. These role-plays can involve everyday interactions or more dramatic events, such as wars, etc. In either case, students should try to represent their respective group as accurately and empathetically as possible. Help the groups avoid mere caricaturing and unfair stereotyping in either group.

Grades 6–8

Food Fair

Activity

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will practice conversation skills while learning about culture in countries where Russian is spoken.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Foreign Language Education

Communication; Communicate in Languages Other Than English

- Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

- Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Time requirement

Preparation: 20 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, two different days.

Materials

Online CultureGrams [World Edition](#):

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Armenia | • Kazakhstan | • Russia |
| • Azerbaijan | • Kyrgyzstan | • Tajikistan |
| • Belarus | • Latvia | • Turkmenistan |
| • Estonia | • Lithuania | • Ukraine |
| • Georgia | • Moldova | • Uzbekistan |

Sections: Eating and Diet

Instructions

1. Organize the class into groups of two or three students. Assign each group one of the above countries.
2. Instruct the students to read the Eating and Diet sections of their country's CultureGram.
3. Using the Online Edition, have the groups look up recipes from their countries. Have students prepare a brief introduction—in Russian—to the country (i.e., where it is, whether Russian is the official language, etc.) and to the food they will make (describing ingredients, flavor, etc.). They should also prepare to demonstrate basic dining etiquette as found in the Eating section of the CultureGram they read. As homework, assign the students to prepare one or two dishes and to make a poster with the name of their country displayed.
4. In class the next day, arrange the desks around the classroom so they make small booths. Have students set up their poster and dish(es).
5. Then, have group members take turns touring their classmates' booths and trying small portions of food. Students manning the booth should give their introduction to the country, food, and dining etiquette. After sampling the food, visitors to the booth should offer reactions to the food in Russian.
6. After all students have had time to visit each booth, meet back together as a class and discuss similarities and differences they noticed in regard to ingredients and etiquette. Have students either respond in a discussion or in a brief write-up.

Questions for further discussion

1. To what extent does geography influence a country's common dishes?

2. There is a lot more to food than the actual ingredients used to make it. Cultural traditions often surround how dishes are prepared, when they are eaten, how they're served, etc. What traditions surround some of the students' favorite dishes? Are the traditions unique to their families or representative of U.S. culture as a whole?

Vocabulary

Borsch: Vegetable soup.

Golubtsy: Stuffed cabbage leaves baked with tomato sauce and eaten with sour cream.

Pelmeni: A pasta dish.

Pirozhki: A stuffed pastry.

Shi: Soup with sour cabbage.

Zakuski: Russian word meaning "appetizers."

Extension Activity

For homework, assign the students to select a favorite recipe from home and find out which ingredients are native to the U.S. (or their region of the U.S. specifically). If the recipe contains food products that the U.S. imports, urge the students find out which countries they're imported from, if possible. Have students share their findings in class, and discuss what the ingredients in a culture's food can say about its wealth.

Note: This lesson plan can be adapted for any language group. For a list of countries in which different languages are spoken, see the [Online Edition's FAQ](#).

Graphing Regional Statistics

Activity

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will learn statistical and graphical methods for comparing data between population groups.

National curriculum standard(s)

Principles and Standards for School Mathematics

- Data Analysis and Probability Standard: Instructional programs from prekindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them.
 - [Grade 6–8]: All students should formulate questions, design studies, and collect data about a characteristic shared by two populations or different characteristics within one population.
 - [Grade 6–8]: All students should select, create, and use appropriate graphical representations of data, including histograms, box plots, and scatterplots.

Developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Time requirement

Preparation: 20 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Data Tables](#)

Instructions

Sierra Leone's real GDP per capita is \$561, while Luxembourg's is \$69,961. Five per 1,000 infants die yearly in New Zealand compared to 80 in Pakistan. Statistics, though they don't tell the whole story about a country, offer helpful tools for tracking demographic and economic trends while comparing countries and regions.

1. Discuss which statistics are used to measure a nation's demographics and economy and why. You might talk about infant mortality, literacy, and life expectancy rates along with Real GDP per capita. Explain the types of deductions that can be made from these statistics; for example, high infant mortality rates indicate that a country's pregnant women receive poor health care. Also mention that statistics can be misleading. For instance, some oil-rich nations have high Real GDPs per capita, but most of their population is poor due to grossly unequal wealth distribution. For the most part, however, these types of statistics provide a valuable way of comparing countries.
2. Choose a pair of statistics to focus on (for example, literacy and life expectancy). Have the students use the sortable data tables to look up these statistics for five countries in some of the world's major regions (Europe, Africa, North America, Caribbean, South America, Asia, Oceania, etc.)
3. Then, have students create averages from the statistics found in the five CultureGrams data tables for each region. From these averages, assign students to draw three histograms. The first should be a comparison of, for example, regional literacy rates; the second, regional life expectancy; and the third, a combination of both statistical averages.
4. Have the students compare and contrast the first two histograms they made. Do they share a similar pattern? Discuss the third histogram. Does there seem to be any correlation between the two statistics they analyzed? If so, what might be the cause of such a relationship? Might it be mostly coincidental, and if so, what other factors might affect literacy, life expectation, or the statistics you chose?

Questions for further discussion

1. How can different graphical representations of statistics influence people's perception of data? Which type of representation would most emphasize the differences between the regional averages found? Which one would minimize that difference? (You can discuss histograms, scatterplots, graphs, pie charts, etc.)
2. Discuss regional trends noted in the activity. What types of factors might cause them? Talk about whether they are geographic, historic, political, etc.

Extension activity

For a more in-depth comparison, have the students create a scatterplot of all the country statistics, identify and eliminate countries that are extreme outliers, and recalculate the regional averages. They would turn in these averages with an explanation of how much the outliers affected the overall statistical picture.

The Dating Game

Activity

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students learn how cultural norms and personal beliefs influence relationships.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Behavioral Studies Standards

- Standard 1: Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior.
 - Level III [Grade 6–8] Benchmark 1: Understands that each culture has distinctive patterns of behavior that are usually practiced by most of the people who grow up in it.

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 20 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Divide the students into groups of two. Assign one to be the group writer and one the group speaker.
2. Divide the blackboard into the following categories: religious norms, societal norms, personal choice, and family culture. Discuss how each area can impact relationship choices.
3. Assign each group in the class five different CultureGrams, each country from a different continent. Have each group scan the Dating and Marriage and Family sections of their assigned CultureGrams.
4. Have the students in each group create an informal chart organizing each country according to the categories listed on the board. Give the students 15–20 minutes to complete this in-class assignment.
5. Have each of the group speakers come up and explain a bit about their assigned countries. Have the students list their countries on the board under the category that most influences the natives' dating and relationship choices.
6. Conduct an in-class discussion about aspects of U.S. American culture regarding dating, marriage, and family life. What similarities are there to the countries listed on the board? What differences?
7. As a class, have the students rank the categories according to what they feel might be most influential in their future dating, marriage, and family life decisions.

Extension activity

Have students read the Dating and Marriage section of the India CultureGram. They then write down their initial reaction to the idea of arranged marriages. Next, have them listen to this [National Public Radio piece](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1054253) (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1054253>), which outlines the pros and cons of arranged marriages. After listening, they should record their thoughts and feelings on arranged marriages again. In class, they compare their two reactions, discussing how their views changed or stayed the same. What cultural values were their initial reactions based on?

Travel Expo

Activity

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will compare countries and evaluate their cultural influence.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

National Standards for Social Studies

Global Connections

- Standard E [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can describe and explain the relationships and tensions between national sovereignty and global interests, in such matters as territory, natural resources, trade, use of technology, and welfare of people.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, 2 different days

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)—East or Southeast Asian country

CultureGrams [Photo Gallery](#)

Supplies needed to make brochures (e.g., Computers or papers, pens, scissors, etc.)

Instructions

1. Divide students into groups of 3 to 4 and assign each group to read a CultureGrams report for a different East or Southeast Asian country.
2. While reading the CultureGrams reports, students should focus on these categories:

- | | | |
|------------|------------|---------------------|
| • History | • Diet | • Economy |
| • Language | • Arts | • Events and Trends |
| • Religion | • Holidays | |

As students read these sections, instruct them to identify how each country's culture, ideas, events, or people may have influenced other countries. This will help the student understand each country's influence on the global culture and facilitate global understanding.

3. After reading the CultureGrams report and conducting additional research, assign students to prepare presentations as if they were representatives from their country's travel bureau or embassy. Presentations should focus on two areas:
 - a) How the country's culture and people have influenced other countries
 - b) Why fellow students should wish to visit the assigned country

As part of the presentation, assign each student to also make a travel brochure. The brochure could include descriptions or images from the Photo Gallery of the country's attractions and important historical figures or events.

4. Following the presentations, hold a vote to see which country the students select as a) the most culturally influential, and b) the most desirable to visit.

Questions for further discussion

1. Lead a discussion about the students' choices. What makes a culture influential? Why do people prefer visiting some countries over others?
2. Thomas Friedman, in his book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, says that there are two ways to make people feel homeless. One is to destroy their homes and the other is to make their homes look like everyone else's. At what point does cultural influence become damaging and in what ways? Has the influence of the United States reached that point?

Extension activity

Refer students to the [BBC site on globalization](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/programmes/globalisation/) (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/programmes/globalisation/>). Have each student pick one of the main four categories to explore further: Inside the Global Giants, Fast Food Factory, Global Music Machine, or The Noisy Planet. Ask students to read through all of the articles in that section and then choose one to focus on. Assign each student to write a short essay summarizing the article. Then, have them write a couple of paragraphs on the pros and cons of this aspect of globalization, including who the winners and losers are in this situation. Have each student share their findings with the class.

Note: This activity can be adapted for any region.

U.S. Power and Pollution

Activity

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will recognize that the United States is a major polluter while understanding the debate over participating in international attempts to decrease pollution.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Environment and Society

- Standard 14: The geographically informed person knows and understands how human actions modify the physical environment.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)—[United States of America](#)

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Data Tables](#)

Instructions

1. Explain to the students how, in the past, the United States has decided not to ratify environmental treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol, though other countries with high greenhouse emissions, such as Brazil, China, and India, are signatories. As one of the largest and most industrialized nations in the world, the United States has a wide-reaching effect on the global environment because of the pollution U.S. companies emit. Similarly, because of its wealth and economic influence, the United States can significantly hamper or help world-wide environmental clean-up plans.
2. Have students refer to the Energy section of the Extremes Data Tables in the CultureGrams Online World Edition. Point out to the class that the United States is one of the top (if not the top) polluters in every section listed.
3. As a class, talk about why the United States pollutes the environment so much. You might look at major industries, the size of its economy and population, etc.
4. Using the Comparison Table, instruct students to pick “Add All” in the top box and “Population” and “Real GDP per capita” in the second. Have students make a list of countries whose population levels and/or Real GDPs per capita are similar to those of the United States.
5. Go back to the Energy tables, and have students compare the emission and usage levels of the countries on their list to those of the United States. Are any pollution levels as high? If so, which ones?
6. Ask the students whether they think that the United States is being fair to the rest of the world. Discuss with the class what the United States could do to reduce pollution (e.g., recycling, lowering factory and car emissions, using alternative sources of fuel, etc.). Who might oppose these changes and why?
7. On the board, make a chart that compares the benefits and costs of signing an international treaty such as the Kyoto Protocol. Read the General Attitudes section of the U.S. CultureGrams report together. Which characteristics might cause U.S. [we use this term because Americans can refer to Central and South Americans too, technically) Americans to resist such international treaties?

Questions for further discussion

1. What are some ways that the students can help lower greenhouse emissions in their daily lives?
2. Which method do they think is more effective in combating the greenhouse effect: passing more restrictive laws or offering polluters incentives to lower emission levels?

Extension activity

Have the students read a [letter](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/03/20010314.html) (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/03/20010314.html) President Bush wrote about why he does not support the Kyoto Protocol. Assign them to write a response letter, either explaining why they agree or disagree with him.

Cricket and Colonization

Activity and Discussion

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will understand the long-lasting effects of colonization.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 1: The geographically informed person knows and understands how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Individuals, Groups and Institutions

- Standard B [Middle Grades]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions*, so that the learner can analyze group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes, less if students read sections at home.

Materials

Blank world maps

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)—Countries with international test cricket teams (See below)

Instructions

1. Explain how identifying popular sports can tell a lot about a country. For example, the country's environment clearly plays a role: skiing is popular in snowy Sweden, sailing is popular in sunny Bahamas, etc. Some popular sports have deep cultural roots, like karate or sumo wrestling in Japan, while others are evidence of global connectivity, such as the spread of baseball and basketball from the United States. A country's popular sports can also say something about its colonial past.
2. Divide the class into a few groups, giving each of them a copy of a blank world map. Using markers, have each group mark with one color the location of the world's international test cricket teams:
 - a. [Australia](#)
 - b. [Bangladesh](#)
 - c. [England](#)
 - d. [India](#)
 - e. [New Zealand](#)
 - f. [Pakistan](#)
 - g. [South Africa](#)
 - h. [Sri Lanka](#)
 - i. [Zimbabwe](#)

The West Indies also has a team, so have students mark [Barbados](#), [Jamaica](#), [Antigua and Barbuda](#), and [St. Lucia](#) as a few representatives.

3. Assign each group to read the History sections of the above CultureGrams from the World Edition, noting each country's relationship with colonialism. Groups can read these together or, to save time, the countries can be divided among group members.
4. With a different color, have the groups indicate which of the countries are former colonies of Great Britain.
5. Compare the two colors, noting the strong relationship between colonialism and the spread of cricket. Are there any countries where cricket is popular that are not former British colonies?

6. Have the students scan the Recreation, Diet, Art, and Language sections of the CultureGrams that they marked on the map as former British colonies. Instruct them to look for further influences Great Britain had on these countries. Discuss the long-lasting cultural effects of colonization.

Questions for further discussion

1. The cultural impact of colonialism goes two ways. Talk about the ways in which Great Britain has been influenced by its colonies, including the languages spoken there and the types of ethnic food that are popular.
2. Some citizens of postcolonial countries advocate a rejection of all things colonial, while others would like to maintain those colonial influences they think have bettered the country. What are the pros and cons of both views? What do the students think and why?

Extension activity

Since the United States is a nation of immigrants, it's likely that some of your students' hobbies, games, and favorite sports originated in a country other than the U.S. Have them do some research and complete a short write-up on the origins, history, and evolution of one of their pastimes. Share these with the class, noting how many cultures have contributed to the way they spend leisure time.

A Snapshot of Brazil

Discussion

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will learn to critically analyze photographs, making deductions from them about Brazil's culture.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Language Arts Standards

Viewing

- Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.
 - Level III [Grades 6-8] Benchmark 1: Understands a variety of messages conveyed by visual media (e.g., main concept, details, themes or lessons, viewpoints).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 40 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)—[Brazil](#)

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Brazil Photo Gallery](#)

Instructions

1. Introduce the lesson by discussing the importance of visual literacy. Talk about “reading” a picture as students would a text.
2. Create a PowerPoint slide show with the following pictures, but leave the captions off. As you go through the slide show as a class, ask the students to make deductions about Brazil based on each picture. Use the following prompts if needed:
 - a. “Hillside Shanties” – Why would these shanty houses be on the hillside (mention that this is often opposite of the U.S., where wealthy people live on the hillsides). What do you think happens to this area when it rains? See the clothes hanging on the line? How much access to electricity do you think these people have?
 - b. “Catholic Church” – What types of cars are parked in front of the church? How new are they? What architectural style does the church exemplify? Where did that style come from do you think? What do the trees tell you about the climate?
 - c. “Japanese Temple” – What type of a place of worship do you think this is? Notice the lettering on the curtain on the left and the wall hangings surrounding the center painting. Are the colors typical of any churches or temples you’ve been in?
 - d. “Residential Campinas” – How much space surrounds each house? What types of building materials are used? Why might all the rooftops look the same? How far away are residential houses from skyscrapers?
 - e. “Soccer Stadium” – What type of a stadium is this? Does it look well-used? How close is it to the city?
 - f. “Downtown Campinas” – How does this metropolis compare to images you’ve seen of New York City or other big cities? Notice the Coca-Cola logo painted on a building in the right of the picture. What does this say about globalization?
3. Give students ten minutes or so to record all of the things they’ve learned about Brazil by looking at the pictures.
4. Then, have the students read the Brazil CultureGrams report to see if they can find in the text any of the things on their list that they learned from the pictures.

Questions for further discussion

1. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words. After completing this activity, do the students agree? Why or why not?
2. After reading the Brazil CultureGrams report, what other pictures do students think should be added to the photo gallery?

Extension activity

Ask students to choose one element from the Brazil pictures they're interested in (i.e. housing, downtown, sports, church, landscape, etc.). Using the Online CultureGrams database, have the students go to the photo gallery and do a search for their term. Then, have students compare the pictures and choose a few with particularly interesting similarities or differences to focus on. Assign them to make a PowerPoint slide show in which they compare and analyze their picks. Provide time in class for them to share their slide shows.

Africa's Borders

Discussion

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will understand how Africa's colonial borders divided ethnic groups and what effects this has on the continent today.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Geography

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 3: The geographically informed person knows and understands how to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

McREL Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 13: Understands the forces of cooperation and conflict that shape the divisions of Earth's surface.
 - Level III [Grade 6–8] Benchmark 5: Understands the factors that affect the cohesiveness and integration of countries (e.g., language and religion in Belgium, the religious differences between Hindus and Muslims in India, the ethnic differences in some African countries that have been independent for only a few decades, the elongated shapes of Italy and Chile).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 10 minutes, less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams World Edition:

- Reports for West African countries (See below)
- [Africa map](#)

Instructions

1. Distribute to the students the gray-scale [PDF map of Africa](#). Explain to the students how most of the current political boundaries of African countries were drawn up by European colonial powers in the mid- to late 19th century, so many peoples found themselves divided into two or three different geographical sections, each belonging to a different colony.
2. To illustrate this point, ask the students to look on the map at Senegal, a nation that completely surrounds The Gambia. This division is due to Senegal's history as a colony of France and The Gambia's history as a colony of Britain. In an agreement between France and Britain, the two colonial powers established these borders in 1889.
3. Ask the students to read the Population sections from the CultureGrams reports of these West African nations:
 - a. [Senegal](#)
 - b. [The Gambia](#)
 - c. [Mauritania](#)
 - d. [Mali](#)
 - e. [Guinea](#)
 - f. [Guinea-Bissau](#)
 - g. [Ivory Coast](#)

Have them identify which of these countries are home to the Wolof ethnic group. Which are home to the Malinke ethnic group (also spelled Malinké, Mandingo, Mandinga, or Mandinka)?

4. Lead a discussion about some of the possible effects of having ethnic groups divided by national borders. Ask students to find a news article about a current or recent conflict in Africa. Does the article identify ethnic tensions as a factor in the conflict?

Comparing Communication Styles

Presentation

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will use CultureGrams to compare the communication styles of Sub-Saharan African countries with communication styles in the U.S. or Canada.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Behavioral Studies Standards

- Standard 1: Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior.
 - Level III [Grade 6–8] Benchmark 1: Understands that each culture has distinctive patterns of behavior that are usually practiced by most of the people who grow up in it.

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)—Sub-Saharan African countries

Instructions

Explain to the class that the ability to communicate effectively across cultures can be vital—it can prevent war, make or break a business deal, and keep a traveler safe. What might be a harmless gesture or word in one region of the world can be offensive in another. Other aspects of communication, including personal space, level of formality, and directness, also vary from country to country, and culturally savvy students know how to modify their communication styles according to their audiences.

1. Divide students into groups of three to four and assign each group to read a CultureGrams report for a different Sub-Saharan African country.
2. While reading the CultureGrams reports, ask students to focus on the categories of Greetings, Gestures, and Visiting to identify the countries' communication styles, both verbal and nonverbal. (Consider level of formality, gender, situational context, personal space, gestures, etc.)
3. Have students consider the following questions: What communication practices are common in the country? What practices are taboo? How do people in the country regard body language, personal space, and eye contact? How might these communication styles be a product of other aspects of the culture (e.g., religion, family)? How are communication styles different from those in the United States or Canada?
4. Have each group give a short presentation comparing communication styles in the United States with those in their assigned African country. The presentations might include skits that represent encounters between someone from the United States or Canada and someone from the assigned African countries. These skits could depict both verbal and nonverbal communication, showing what misunderstandings might arise.
5. Talk with the students about how communication styles differ between cultures. In what ways are they similar? Why is it important to be aware of these similarities and differences?

Questions for further discussion

1. Acceptable communication styles not only differ from culture to culture but also from family to family. Ask students what types of communication rules their families stress. What might account for the differences they notice? Which similarities do most of them share?
2. There are also generational differences in communication etiquette. What types of things do the students' grandparents consider rude that is acceptable among today's young people?

Australian Comparison

Research

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will gain a greater understanding of Australian society and how it compares to the United States.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture.
- Standard E [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can articulate the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

National Standards for Geography

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes, less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#):

- [Australia](#)
- [United States](#)

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Comparison Table](#) and [Comparison Graphs](#)

Instructions

1. Introduce this activity by discussing some of the similarities between Australia and the United States (e.g., large areas, former British colonies, English-speaking). Then highlight a few of the differences (population size, unique wildlife, etc.).
2. Distribute to each student a copy of the Australia report. Ask them to identify similarities and differences between Australia and the United States by highlighting passages in the Australia report with a different color for each (e.g., green for similarities, red for differences). Instruct them to make notes in the margins where appropriate. You may also want to distribute copies of the United States report to help them generate ideas. What similarities surprised them? What differences surprised them?
3. Using the build-your-own [Comparison Table](#), select Australia and the United States in the Nations field. For the categories field, select “Add All.” Then click “Create Comparison Table.” Alternatively, use the [Comparison Graphs](#) feature. How do the two countries compare?
4. To summarize their findings, have students divide a piece of paper in half by folding it lengthwise. In the left column, have them list ten characteristics of Australian culture. In the right column, students should list the corresponding U.S. characteristics.

Colonization of Africa

Research and Discussion

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will learn about and understand patterns and effects of European colonization in Africa.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Geography

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 3: The geographically informed person knows and understands how to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

McREL Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 13: Understands the forces of cooperation and conflict that shape the divisions of Earth's surface.
 - Level III [Grade 6–8] Benchmark 5: Understands the factors that affect the cohesiveness and integration of countries (e.g., language and religion in Belgium, the religious differences between Hindus and Muslims in India, the ethnic differences in some African countries that have been independent for only a few decades, the elongated shapes of Italy and Chile).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes (two class periods), less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)—West African countries (See below)

CultureGrams Online—[map of Africa](#)

Instructions

1. Throughout history, powerful nations and empires have set out to explore and settle in new parts of the world. Some of the most notable exploration and colonization were carried out by the Roman and Ottoman empires, whose territory covered much of Europe and parts of Asia and North Africa. Beginning in the 1500s, European nations began exploring and claiming parts of Africa. In the late 1800s, the colonization became a “scramble for Africa” as the European powers hastened to secure African territory ahead of their rivals.
2. Distribute to each student the CultureGrams printable [map of Africa](#). Ask students to color on the map former colonies of France (using the list below).
 - [Algeria](#)
 - [Benin](#)
 - [Burkina Faso](#)
 - [Cameroon](#)
 - [Central African Republic](#)
 - [Chad](#)
 - [Comoros](#)
 - [Gabon](#)
 - [Guinea](#)
 - [Ivory Coast](#)
 - [Madagascar](#)
 - [Mali](#)
 - [Morocco](#)
 - [Niger](#)
 - [Senegal](#)
 - [Togo](#)
 - [Tunisia](#)
3. As a class, discuss what the completed maps reveal about French influence in Africa.
4. Ask the students to read a CultureGrams report from one of these countries. Have them list some of the effects of colonization on the country and what effects are still felt today.

Doing Business in Japan

Research and Writing

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will understand the differences between business customs in Japan and North America.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Geography

Human Systems

- Standard 11: The geographically informed person knows and understands the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams World Edition—[Japan](#)

Articles from the [BBC web site](http://news.bbc.co.uk/) (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>)

[Japan National Tourist Organization web site](http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/index.html) (<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/index.html>)

Instructions

1. Introduce this activity by discussing Japan's role as a major contributor to the world economy. Have students access the [BBC web site](http://news.bbc.co.uk/) (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>) to find an article related to the Japanese economy. (For example, they can type "Japan" and "economy" into the Search field.)
2. Ask students to read the CultureGrams Japan report, focusing on the question "What would a North American need to know to make a good impression in Japan?" Have them pay particular attention to the Greetings and Gestures section.
3. Ask students to create a bullet-point list of what they feel are the "top-ten" most important things a North American business traveler should know before going to Japan. Lead a discussion on what the consequences might be if a business traveler failed to follow these customs.

Extension activity

Have students access the web site for the [Japan National Tourist Organization](http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/index.html) (<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/index.html>). Ask students to find recommendations for tourist sites a business traveler could visit while in Japan.

Senegalese Fashions

Research and Writing

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will identify the most common styles of clothing for men and women in Senegal.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard E [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can articulate the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

Individual Development and Identity

- Standard C [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *individual development and identity*, so that the learner can describe the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

National Standards for Geography

Human Systems

- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes, less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams World Edition—[Senegal](#)

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Senegal Photo Gallery](#)

Instructions

1. Ask students to read the CultureGrams Senegal report, paying particular attention to the clothing described in the Personal Appearance section. Have them also identify information presented in other sections that may impact how people in Senegal dress. For example, warm temperatures may contribute to clothes being loose-fitting, and the predominance of Islam may influence their modesty. After they are finished reading, lead a brief discussion on their findings.
2. Refer the students to the Senegal photo album in the CultureGrams Photo Gallery. The students should view each photo, taking notes what type of clothing the individuals pictured are wearing. Are the men wearing *boubous*? Are the women wearing head wraps that match their dresses? What type of clothing to children wear? Are the people wearing Western clothing young or old, male or female?
3. Have students summarize their findings in a short essay.

Extension activity

As an additional activity, you may ask students to design their own Senegalese fashions. Using paper and colored pencils, have the students design a pattern for a *boubou* or dress similar to those they've seen in the Senegal photo album.

Travel Guide

Research and Writing

Grade level

6–8

Objective

Students will understand differences in behavior patterns between target cultures and their own culture.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture.

Global Connections

- Standard B [Middle Grades]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

National Standards for Geography

Places and Regions

- Standard 4: The geographically informed person knows and understands the physical and human characteristics of places.
- Standard 6: The geographically informed person knows and understands how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Give each student a copy of a CultureGrams country report. Instruct students to identify behavioral patterns in the country as they read the reports. Although many sections of the reports may provide insight into behavior, students should pay particular attention to the Greetings, Gestures, and Visiting sections.
2. Have students prepare to make a list by dividing their paper in half with a pencil mark. Ask students to list ten behavioral patterns they discovered by reading the CultureGrams reports in the left-hand column. For example, students could list how people greet and address one another, how they spend their free time, what gestures are common, etc.
3. Discuss with the students what kind of behavioral patterns exist in their own culture. In the right-hand column, for each of the ten patterns listed, have the students briefly write a short response, detailing if the same behavioral pattern is practiced in their culture.
4. Have each student write a short paper as if he or she were a travel guide writer helping a student traveler from the assigned country prepare to visit the United States. What would the traveler need to know in order to fit in? Which of the traveler's native behavioral patterns might lead to misunderstandings in the United States? Would a visitor from the assigned country find it difficult to adapt to life in the United States?

Extension activity

Publish all of the papers in a class travel guide.

Grades 9–12

Turkey: Europe or Asia?

Activity

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will understand the factors that influence how countries are grouped into regions.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Places and Regions

- Standard 6: The geographically informed person knows and understands how culture and experience influence people's perception of places and regions.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#):

- [Turkey](#)
- Middle Eastern reports (See below)
- European reports (See below)

Instructions

1. Divide the class into two debate teams: one that will argue that Turkey should be classified as part of Europe and another that will argue that it should be grouped with Asia. Select three students to be judges. (Make sure these students are aware that they must read both teams' materials.)
2. For homework, assign all students to read the CultureGrams report for Turkey. Then, assign each team to read the reports from the two different regions. Team One will read selections from the Middle Eastern reports. Team Two will read selections from the European reports.

Team One: Middle East

- [Iran](#)
- [Syria](#)
- [Lebanon](#)
- etc.

Team Two: Europe

- [Greece](#)
- [Macedonia](#)
- [Bulgaria](#)
- [Albania](#)
- etc.

Instruct the students that they may want to skim the CultureGrams reports assigned to the opposite group in order to anticipate their opponent's arguments. Remind the three students who are judges that they must read the assignments for both teams.

3. In class, give each team time to prepare and organize its arguments.
4. Divide the board in half and have each team write the group's main arguments on it.
5. Have a spokesperson from each team explain their group's arguments, without responding to what the other team has written on the board.
6. Give the teams time to consult and come up with rebuttals, while reinforcing their initial arguments. A different spokesperson from each team delivers the rebuttals to the class, with help from team members who raise their hands to offer additional comments.
7. The class judges decide which team wins and justify their decision to the class.

Questions for further discussion

1. Why would Turkey's government want to be classified as part of Europe? (Discuss how they are attempting to gain membership in the European Union).
2. Why would other elements of the population be more interested in Turkey being grouped with the Middle East? (Discuss cultural reasons).
3. Can the students think of any other countries that might fit in more than one region?

Extension activity

Have the students write a persuasive essay to the publisher of a fictitious U.S. geography textbook. Instruct the students that these essays should elaborate on the points brought up in the debate and make a case for Turkey being placed either in the Middle East or Europe. Their essays should also demonstrate a keen awareness of audience while also addressing and refuting counter-arguments.

Defining a Region

Activity and Discussion

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will know which characteristics are used to classify regions and what such classification can tell them about the world.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Places and Regions

- Standard 4: The geographically informed person knows and understands the physical and human characteristics of places.
- Standard 5: The geographically informed person knows and understands that people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity.
- Standard 6: The geographically informed person knows and understands how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)—Scandinavian countries (See below)

Instructions

1. Organize the students into groups of five. Assign each group member to read the CultureGram of a different Scandinavian country:
 - a. [Norway](#)
 - b. [Sweden](#)
 - c. [Finland](#)
 - d. [Denmark](#)
 - e. [Iceland](#)
2. Have group members discuss the similarities among the countries in their region and attempt to draw conclusions about why the countries have been grouped together. Students can discuss both human characteristics as well as physical characteristics. For example, do the people in these countries speak a common language, share a common history, follow the same religion, practice similar customs, share the same level of economic development, etc.? Are there physical boundaries that group these countries together or divide them?
3. Ask the students to summarize their findings in a bullet-pointed list.
4. Have one member of each group present the group's findings to the class.
5. Lead a discussion on how grouping countries into regions helps us understand the world's peoples.

Questions for further discussion

1. What kinds of legal regional divisions exist? Discuss international treaty organizations (NATO), political unions (EU), and free trade zones (NAFTA, CARICOM, ASEAN). Should these be spelled out?
2. A common phrase describing strategic regional relationships goes, "My enemy's enemy is my friend." What does this phrase mean? Ask students if they can think of any historical or current examples that would illustrate this principle. (e.g., the alliance of the United States and the U.S.S.R. during World War II) Discuss with the students whether the U.S.'s current alliance with Pakistan in fighting terrorism fits this maxim. Why or why not?

Extension activity

The Scandinavian countries fit neatly into a region; however, not all countries do. As a homework assignment, have students read the CultureGram for Turkey along with a selection of other CultureGrams from the Middle East (Iran, Syria, Lebanon, etc.) and Europe (Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, etc.). Instruct them to then compare Turkey to both

regions and decide whether Turkey should be classified as part of Europe or the Middle East. Have students come to class prepared to defend their choice in a class debate. After the debate, discuss why Turkey's government might want to be classified as part of Europe since the country is attempting to gain membership in the European Union, while other elements of the population want to characterize Turkey as Middle Eastern for cultural reasons.

Mexican Labor: NAFTA and Immigration

Discussion

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will better understand important issues facing Mexico and the U.S. Hispanic community, including NAFTA and immigration.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Geography Standards

Human Systems

- Standard 11: The geographically informed person knows and understands the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.
- Standard 12: The geographically informed person knows and understands the process, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 50 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition—Mexico](#)

CultureGrams Online Edition—[Mexico Photo Gallery](#)

[Pew Hispanic Center poll](#) (<http://pewhispanic.org/files/execsum/52.pdf>)

Questions for fishbowl (See below)

Instructions

3. Begin the lesson by having students study the picture entitled “Hotels in Cancún” in the [Mexico photo album](#) from the Online World Edition. Read the caption out loud and discuss the ways in which the United States takes advantage of and benefits from the cheap labor that Mexico provides.
4. Next, in order to give students an image of what life is like for many Mexicans, display the following pictures:
 - a. “Boys Fishing”
 - b. “Children Eating Tortillas”
 - c. “Making Masa”
 - d. “Making Tamales”
 - e. “Schoolchildren”
 - f. “Rustic Stove”

Discuss why Mexican people, like those from the pictures, might be attracted to work in U.S. factories on the Mexican border, even though they get paid much less than their U.S. American counterparts would for doing the same work.
5. Introduce NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) by reading the Economy section of the Mexico CultureGram as a class. Provide more details as you think necessary, outlining both the pros (increased jobs with higher-than-average wages for Mexicans, increased profits for U.S. companies, etc.) and the cons (U.S. jobs exported to Mexico, unsafe or unregulated working conditions in *maquiladoras*, underpaid Mexican workers, etc.).
6. U.S. companies also benefit from cheap labor of Mexican workers inside the United States. In order to offer a Hispanic perspective on immigration, discuss the findings of a recent [Pew Hispanic Center poll](#). This poll showed that large percentages of Mexicans expressed a desire to immigrate to the United States; however, there were mixed feelings among Mexicans already in the United States as to how beneficial such immigration would be.
7. Move the desks into a fishbowl formation (one small circle in the center of the room surrounded by a much larger one outside it). Ask for three or four volunteers to sit in the center. The rules for the fishbowl are:
 - Only the students in the center may speak.
 - Those on the outside circle must tap the shoulder of a student in the inside circle to trade places.
 - Everyone must participate.

To motivate students to join in, place a candy bowl in the center of the inner circle or award points for participation. Students in the center begin their discussion by drawing from a bowl of questions you have already prepared on the economic, cultural, and ethical ramifications of the use of cheap Mexican labor in relation to NAFTA and immigration (illegal or otherwise). When the discussion dies down, students simply pick another question out of the bowl. Continue until most, if not all, of the class has had a chance in the inner circle.

Extension activity

For homework, have students read a [BBC article](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3091821.stm) (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3091821.stm) about women who were killed in Ciudad Juarez, which is on the U.S. border near El Paso. The majority of these women worked in U.S.-owned *maquiladoras*, or factories. Have students brainstorm connections between the article and the class discussion on NAFTA and immigration and write out a bulleted list with their ideas. For example, they might notice that many young, single girls live in Juarez in order to work in these factories, which makes the city a target for the killer or killers. Also, some have conjectured that the murders are being committed by one or more persons living in El Paso, who can pass in and out of Mexico easily and undetected due to his/her American nationality.

Tracing the Effects of Slavery

Discussion

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will understand the geographical scope of the slave trade. They will be able to trace some of the lingering socioeconomic and cultural effects of slavery across the world.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for World History

Era 7: An Age of Revolutions, 1750–1914

- Standard 6: The student understands major global trends from 1750–1914.
 - [Grade 7–12]: Therefore, the student is able to describe major patterns of long-distance migration of Europeans, Africans, and Asians and analyze causes and consequences of these movements.

Developed by the National Center for History in the Schools

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes, less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#) (See below)

Instructions

1. Explain to the students how, besides being a general atrocity and a personal tragedy for the millions of Africans who were sold as slaves, the African slave trade has had a major effect on the history of the world. Slavery has influenced the historical development and current cultural and socioeconomic conditions of African nations—from which individuals were captured—and nations in the Americas—to which Africans were brought as slaves.
2. Divide the class in half to form two groups. Have each group read from these selections in class or at home:

Group One

- [United States](#) (History)
- [Antigua and Barbuda](#) (History, Arts, Holidays)
- [Barbados](#) (History, Language, Arts)
- [Haiti](#) (History, Population)
- [St. Lucia](#) (History, Population, Holidays)
- [St. Kitts and Nevis](#) (History, Flag description)
- [St. Vincent and the Grenadines](#) (History, Holidays)

Group Two

- [Angola](#) (History)
- [Botswana](#) (Religion)
- [Malawi](#) (History)
- [Mozambique](#) (History)
- [Senegal](#) (History)
- [Sierra Leone](#) (History, Population, Religion)

3. Ask the students in Group Two to discuss the circumstances surrounding the African side of the slave trade, in addition to any long-lasting effects it has had on populations or religions.
4. Ask the students in Group One discuss the history and cultural impact of slavery in those countries. What did it take to end slavery? What types of economies were created as a result of the slave trade? How did it influence the arts and languages of the Americas?
5. Have each group prepare a short presentation to share their findings with the other group.
6. As a class, analyze the Country and Development Data for all of the countries. Which statistics might slavery have influenced and how?

Extension activity

For background information, read the May 2005 International Labor Organization's report on modern-day slavery entitled [A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour](#). Go to <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/declaris>, click on Products and Publications, then Global Reports.

Explain to the class that slavery still exists and briefly discuss the various forms it takes (i.e. child and bonded laborers, sex slaves, domestic servants, agricultural workers, etc.). For homework, instruct students to look up a current event

dealing with a form of modern-day slavery, then do a write-up that summarizes the event and analyzes the laws and circumstances that result in continued slavery; they might also compare the effects of modern-day slavery with those of the African slave trade.

Germany's East and West

Discussion, Research, and Writing

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will understand the reasons for the division of Germany, how it affected German society, and what effects remain today.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for World History

Era 9: The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes

- Standard 1: How post–World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up.
 - 1B. The student understands why global power shifts took place and the Cold War broke out in the aftermath of World War II.
 - [Grades 7–12]: The student is able to analyze major differences in the political ideologies and values of the Western democracies and the Soviet bloc.
- Standard 2: The search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.
 - 2C. The student understands how liberal democracy, market economies, and human rights movements have reshaped political and social life.
 - [Grades 7–12]: The student is able to explain why the Soviet and other communist governments collapsed and the Soviet Union splintered into numerous states in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Developed by the National Center for History in the Schools

Time requirement

Preparation: 1 hour and 30 minutes

In-class: 90 minutes, two different days; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition—Germany](#)

Recommended articles from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Instructions

1. Ask students to read the History section of the Germany report. Using this background, discuss in greater detail how the post–World War II division of Germany led to the creation of an East German socialist state and the construction of the Berlin Wall. How would people have felt when the Wall fell and Germany was reunited?
2. Ask the students to read the remainder of the CultureGrams Germany report, making note of all instances where differences between Germans from the former East and the former West are discussed (e.g., in General Attitudes, tensions between people in the west and east exist; in Family, both parents are more likely to work in the east; in Economy, living standards in the east are lower, etc.). Use this reading to underscore the concept of the *Mauer im Kopf* (the Wall in the Head)—the idea that even though the Berlin Wall no longer exists, divisions remain between people in the west and east.
3. Introduce the phenomenon known as *Ostalgie*, or nostalgia for the *Ost* (East), by having the students read the following articles from the BBC:
 - a. [“Trabant exhaust fumes sold online”](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4694545.stm) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4694545.stm>
 - b. [“Germany battles over right to reminisce”](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3077054.stm) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3077054.stm>
 - c. [“Germans flock to nostalgia film”](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/2836215.stm) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/2836215.stm>
 - d. [“Mini East Germany’ planned”](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2809177.stm) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2809177.stm>
4. Ask students to summarize the readings in a short essay. Why would people think fondly of the former East Germany? Why is that controversial? Lead a discussion using these questions.

Disease: Cultural and Geographic Influences

Presentation

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will learn how culture influences communicable and non-communicable diseases and how to present that information to a specific audience.

National curriculum standard(s)

McREL Health Standards

- Standard 2: Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health.
 - Level IV [Grade 9-12] Benchmark 6: Understands how cultural diversity enriches and challenges health behaviors (e.g., various food sources of nutrients available in different cultural and ethnic cuisines, influence of cultural factors on the treatment of diseases).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 1 hour and 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, two different days; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#):

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Australia | • China | • Italy |
| • Bahamas | • Comoros | • Malta |
| • Bangladesh | • England | • Myanmar |
| • Botswana | • Germany | • Netherlands |
| • Cambodia | • Guyana | • South Africa |
| • Canada | • Haiti | • United States |

Sections: Land and Climate, Diet, Recreation, Education, and Health

Instructions

Health and fitness can be affected by a variety of forces, including environment, diet, living conditions, literacy, and access to health care.

1. Teach the students the difference between communicable and non-communicable diseases and which of the above forces might contribute to each. Then, as examples of each disease, give background information on AIDS, malaria, cancer, and heart disease.
2. Divide the class into four groups, each of which will focus on one of the four diseases. Have students then read, at home or in class, the following sections for their group of countries: Land and Climate, Diet, Recreation, Education, and Health.
 - a. AIDS: Bahamas, Guyana, Haiti, Botswana, South Africa
 - b. Malaria: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Comoros, China, Myanmar
 - c. Heart disease: United States, Canada, Bahamas, England, Malta
 - d. Cancer: United States, Italy, Australia, Germany, The Netherlands
3. Instruct each group to make a power point presentation outlining the geographic and cultural factors that have contributed to the spread of their assigned disease, while also suggesting possible ways of preventing the disease. Students should pick a specific audience (general public, health care professionals, legislators, etc.) from the affected countries and design a presentation that educates that audience about the problem while persuasively offering solutions.
4. Allow time in class for the presentations. After each one, have the class analyze how well the power point targeted the desired audience.

Questions for further discussion

1. Reported cancer rates are much higher for developed countries than for underdeveloped ones. Why might that be? (Discuss the fact that many people in underdeveloped countries die of other causes before they are old enough to develop cancer).
2. What can teenagers personally do to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS?

Extension activity

As a class, decide on one way students might be able to help fight disease in another country. Ideas might include donating money as a class to a health-related charity, collecting scarce medical supplies and sending them to a hospital in the class's country of choice, etc.

Culture Charting

Research

Grade level
9–12

Objective

Students will understand similarities and differences in human characteristics from different world regions.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [High School]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can apply an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns.
- Standard E [High School]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can demonstrate the value of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

People, Places, & Environments

- Standard H [High School]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *people, places, and environments*, so that the learner can examine, interpret, and analyze physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land use, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas, and ecosystem changes.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

National Standards for Geography

Places and Regions

- Standard 4: The geographically informed person knows and understands the physical and human characteristics of places.

Human Systems

- Standard 9: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.
- Standard 10: The geographically informed person knows and understands the characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, two different class sessions; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Ask each student to read one CultureGrams report from each continent (or other region you designate) to identify some of each country's key characteristics. These could include climate, landscape, population size, major languages, major religions, typical clothing, common foods, type of economy (e.g., agricultural, services), and major health issues.
2. Have each student briefly summarize these characteristics in a "culture chart" to compare their findings. The nations should be listed across the top of the chart, a column for each. The characteristic categories should be listed down the left-hand side, a row for each. Have students fill out each box in the grid. For example, in the Brazil column, the box in the "Major Languages" row would say "Portuguese."
3. Have the students write a short essay outlining the conclusions they are able to draw from their culture charts. How are the countries similar? How are they different? What characteristics did they find surprising? What elements of the nations' physical characteristics may have influenced their human characteristics?

Extension activity

Have students read CultureGrams reports from two or three countries within a continent or region (such as neighboring countries) and create culture charts based on their findings.

AIDS in Africa

Research and Discussion

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will understand the impact of AIDS in Africa and the actions being taken to combat the pandemic.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Health Education

- Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention. Performance indicators center around identifying what good health is, recognizing health problems, and ways in which lifestyle, the environment, and public policies can promote health.

Developed by the Joint Committee for National School Health Education Standards

McREL Geography Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 2: Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment
 - Level IV [Grade 9–12] Benchmark 2: Knows the spatial dynamics of various contemporary and historical events (e.g., the spread of radiation from the Chernobyl nuclear accident, how physical features have deterred migrations and invasions, trade and transportation in the contemporary world, the diffusion of contagious diseases such as the bubonic plague in 14th-century Europe or AIDS in the present-day world).

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 1.5 hours

In-class: 90 minutes, two different days; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams Online World Edition:

- [Africa map](#)
- [Extremes Tables: Health](#)
- [Comparison Table](#)

Website for the [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#)

(<http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/about/aids/default.asp>)

Instructions

1. Give an overview of HIV/AIDS. Describe the impact of the disease globally and its pervasiveness in Africa in particular. To illustrate the severity of the African AIDS pandemic, distribute or have students access the “Most adults with HIV/AIDS” table in the [Health section of the Extremes tables](#).
2. Distribute a gray-scale [PDF map of Africa](#) to each student. Using the HIV/AIDS table, students should identify and shade with color the countries with the world’s highest adult HIV/AIDS rates.
3. Explain the concept of life expectancy to the students (you may want to use the definition in the [Concepts and Terminology](#) section). Then ask the students to access the CultureGrams [Comparison Table](#). For the nations, have the students click “Add All.” For the categories, have the students select “Life Expectancy (Female)” and “Life Expectancy (Male).” Then have them create the table and sort it by either “Life Expectancy” heading so the countries with the lowest life expectancy appear at the top.
4. Ask the students to identify the ten countries with the highest HIV/AIDS rates. How do these countries compare to other countries in terms of life expectancy?
5. Conclude the activity with a discussion on students’ findings. Discuss some of the social impacts of having nearly 40 percent of a country’s adult population infected with HIV/AIDS. (Young population, large number of orphans, grandparents or older children forced into role of family head, decreased economic activity, etc.)

Extension activity

1. Have the students access the website for the [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/about/aids/default.asp) (<http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/about/aids/default.asp>) to research some of the measures taken to fight AIDS. Students should use the “See the listing of all our funded AIDS programs” link to access the programs for specific African countries.
2. Ask the students to create a list of some the implemented programs. As a class, discuss some of the actions being taken to combat the African AIDS pandemic.

Effects of World War II

Research and Discussion

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will understand the worldwide impact of World War II.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for World History

Era 9: The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes

- Standard 1: How post–World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up.
 - 1B. The student understands why global power shifts took place and the Cold War broke out in the aftermath of World War II.
 - [Grades 7–12]: The student is able to analyze major differences in the political ideologies and values of the Western democracies and the Soviet bloc.
 - 1C. The student understands how African, Asian, and Caribbean peoples achieved independence from European colonial rule.
 - [Grades 9–12]: The student is able to analyze the impact of World War II and postwar global politics on the rise of mass nationalist movements in Africa and Southeast Asia.

Developed by the National Center for History in the Schools

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, two different days; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#) (See below)

Instructions

1. Explain to students that World War II dramatically altered the cultural and political landscape of the world, not just in Europe, Asia, and the United States, but in many other places as well. The war touched regions as diverse as Oceania, Africa, and the Caribbean. In addition to the human casualties resulting from the war, borders were redrawn, new governments came to power, alliances shifted, and economies were destroyed and rebuilt. Many of the effects of World War II can still be seen today.
2. Using the CultureGrams World Edition, have students read the histories of the nations affected by World War II. Some options are listed below:

• American Samoa	• Estonia	• Israel	• North Korea
• Antigua and Barbuda	• Finland	• Italy	• Poland
• Bahamas	• French Polynesia	• Japan	• Qatar
• Bosnia and Herzegovina	• Germany	• Libya	• Russia
• China	• Greece	• Luxembourg	• Solomon Islands
• Congo	• Guyana	• Malaysia	• Switzerland
• Croatia	• Hungary	• Marshall Islands	• Tunisia
• Czech Republic	• Indonesia	• Micronesia	• United States
• England			
3. With information from these history sections, have students compare the major combatants (e.g., the United States, England, Russia, Germany, Japan) as well as smaller nations (e.g., Czech Republic, Poland, North Korea, the Solomon Islands, and Qatar) affected by the war. Students may compare major combatants with major combatants (England to Russia) or compare major combatants to smaller nations (Japan to North Korea).
4. Lead a class discussion about the scope and effects of World War II. Discuss the wide-ranging impact of the conflict, the economic devastation resulting from the war, the Holocaust, the rise of communism, colonial policy after the war, etc. What roles did various countries play in the war effort depending on their geographic location?

Which countries suffered the most as a result of the war? For which countries could the war's effects be seen as positive? Are there any regional patterns? What effects of World War II can still be seen today?

Government Comparison

Research and Discussion

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will recognize the diversity of government types and distinguishing characteristics of each.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Geography

Human Systems

- Standard 13: The geographically informed person knows and understands how forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

McREL Civics Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard 2: Understands the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments.
 - Level IV [Grade 9–12] Benchmark 4: Understands how relationships between government and civil society in constitutional democracies differ from those in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

Developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, two different days; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#) (See below)

[Freedom House web site: Country Ratings](#) (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=1>)

Instructions

1. Governments take many different forms. Some are democratic, provide for civil liberties, and place an emphasis on individual choice. Other governments are controlled by a small group or single leader. How a country is governed affects everything from economy to religion.
2. Using the CultureGrams World Edition, ask students to identify different types of governments found across the world. Discuss possible benefits and drawbacks of each type of system. What impact does government type have on other parts of the culture? For example:

Democratic Republics

[United States](#)

[Nigeria](#)

[India](#)

Constitutional Monarchies

[England](#) (UK)

[Sweden](#)

[Thailand](#)

Dictatorships

[Turkmenistan](#)

[Zimbabwe](#)

Monarchies

[Swaziland](#)

[Saudi Arabia](#)

One-party Totalitarian States

[Laos](#)

[Cuba](#)

[China](#)

3. Have students read a report for [Vietnam](#) (one-party state), [Myanmar](#) (military regime), or [Libya](#) (one-party dictatorship) to see how the government influences its people in categories such as General Attitudes, Religion, Economy, Communications, and Education. Have them summarize their findings in a short essay.

Extension activity

Have students access the [Country Ratings](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2007) section (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2007>) of the Freedom House web site to see how the countries they studied compare to others in terms of political rights and civil liberties.

Model European Union

Research and Discussion

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will learn about the European Union and participate in a model EU to debate issues facing the organization.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Power, Authority, & Governance

- Standard A [High School]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of *power, authority, and governance*, so that the learner can examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual (or individual nation) in relation to the general welfare.
- Standard C [High School]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of *power, authority, and governance*, so that the learner can analyze and explain ideas and mechanisms to meet needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, establish order and security, and balance competing conceptions of a just society.
- Standard F [High School]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of *power, authority, and governance*, so that the learner can analyze and evaluate conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

National Standards for Geography

Human Systems

- Standard 11: The geographically informed person knows and understands the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.
- Standard 13: The geographically informed person knows and understands how forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

Developed by the National Council for Geographic Education

Time requirement

Preparation: 1 hour and 30 minutes

In-class: 2 hours and 20 minutes, three different days; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#) (See below)

[European Union web site](http://europa.eu/index_en.htm) (http://europa.eu/index_en.htm)

News articles on issues facing the EU

Instructions

5. Briefly introduce students to the history and purpose of the European Union. You may want to access information from the [European Union web site](http://europa.eu/index_en.htm) (http://europa.eu/index_en.htm). With roots of the organization dating back to the 1950s, the multinational umbrella government sets policies on everything from the economy to health. The organization has grown from 6 countries in the 1950s to 27 countries in 2005.
6. On an [EU map](#), show the students the member countries (including the candidate countries Croatia, Macedonia, and Turkey.)
 - Austria
 - Belgium
 - Bulgaria
 - Cyprus
 - Czech Republic
 - Denmark
 - Estonia
 - Finland
 - France
 - Germany
 - Greece
 - Hungary
 - Ireland
 - Italy
 - Latvia
 - Lithuania
 - Luxembourg
 - Malta
 - Netherlands
 - Poland
 - Portugal
 - Romania
 - Slovakia
 - Slovenia
 - Spain
 - Sweden
 - United Kingdom

7. Organize students into a model EU, with most of the class representing the member countries and a few representing the candidate countries. Each student should be assigned to represent a specific country, either an EU country or a candidate country. In order to participate in this activity, students should also read the CultureGrams report of the country they represent (and that of at least one of the candidate countries), so that they can support their country's interests in a debate.
8. Have the students each bring in at least one news article about an issue facing the EU. It might deal with new member states, economic policy, or how to govern the EU.
9. After this initial preparation, pick three main topics to be debated, with at least one topic being the admission of new member countries. Have students representing the member countries and candidate countries debate the pros and cons of admitting the new nations. Presentations should focus on the positive aspects of the countries and on what they can contribute to the European Union as a whole. Then have presentations on the other issues.
10. After all the presentations have been given, have the students vote on the topics. They should be able explain the rationale for their decisions to the class.
11. Lead a follow-up discussion about what the students learned from the Model EU.

Extension activity

This activity may also be adapted for other regional organizations (NATO, ASEAN, etc.).

South Africa Today

Research and Discussion

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will understand how South Africa's apartheid system was abolished and learn about the challenges the nation still faces.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for World History

Era 9: The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes

- Standard 2: The search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.
 - 2C. The student understands how liberal democracy, market economies, and human rights movements have reshaped political and social life.
 - [Grades 5–12]: Therefore, the student is able to explain the dismantling of the apartheid system in South Africa and the winning of political rights by the black majority.

Developed by the National Center for History in the Schools

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 2 hours and 30 minutes, three different class sessions; less if students read selections at home

Materials

CultureGrams World Edition—[South Africa](#)

Articles from the BBC (See below)

Recommended web sites

Instructions

1. Ask students to read the History section of the South Africa report. As a class, discuss the apartheid system and how it was abolished.
2. Ask the students to finish reading the South Africa report. Have them list some of improvements in South African society since the end of apartheid. Also have them list the challenges South Africa still faces.
3. Have students read the following articles from the BBC:
 - ["South Africa patient for change"](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3622095.stm) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3622095.stm>
 - ["How South Africa has changed"](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3608149.stm) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3608149.stm>
 - ["Mbeki promises water and power"](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3736045.stm) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3736045.stm>
 - ["South Africa Life today"](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/africa/04/photo_journal/life_today/html/1.stm) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/africa/04/photo_journal/life_today/html/1.stm
 - ["South Africa: Leaders"](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/africa/04/photo_journal/leaders/html/1.stm) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/africa/04/photo_journal/leaders/html/1.stm
4. Organize the students into small groups and have them discuss the following question: If they were leaders of the South African government, how would they address South Africa's challenges? Instruct students in each group to write a proposal with their ideas.
5. Have the students present their proposals to the class.

Defining Culture

Research and Presentation

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will understand how to define culture and how to preserve diversity while maintaining unity.

National curriculum standard(s)

Curriculum Standards for the Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [High School]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can apply an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns.
- Standard E [High School]: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can demonstrate the value of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes, two different days; plus time outside the classroom for research

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)—[Spain](#)

Instructions

1. Have students divide a piece of paper into two columns, one labeled “Country-wide” and the other “Regional.” As they read through the Spain CultureGram, instruct students to take notes on which characteristics the country shares as a whole (i.e. low birthrate, religion, personal appearance, visiting, etc.) compared to those that differ by region (language, diet, the arts, holidays, etc.).
2. Then, have students individually review their notes and star the characteristics they think are the most influential building blocks of a culture. Which column has the most stars in it? Is there a consensus on whether Spain is, for the most part, culturally unified or divided?
3. Ask for several volunteers to share their decisions. The variation in their answers can provide a segue into a discussion on the difficulty of defining culture. Talk about the political reasons for defining culture broadly in order to unite people.
4. Ask students to pick one characteristic that differs by region to do outside research on. For example, a student could research how closely related Spain’s four official languages are and find out what percentage of Spaniards speaks each one. Another student could research how festivals or food vary from region to region (Basque country, Galicia, and Catalonia), etc. Have students present their completed research to the class.
5. After briefly explaining Spain’s federalist system (see the Government section for background), lead a discussion about the languages and holidays deemed official and the amount of political autonomy each region has. Ask students if agree with these choices. Based on their research and understanding of Spain’s culture(s), would they propose anything different?

Questions for further discussion

1. The United States is one of the most diverse countries in the world. Ask students to share about their experiences and culture(s). Which languages are spoken and what kind of dishes are served in their homes? What kind of family traditions do they have? Which culture(s) do they consider themselves a part of? Do they identify with a specific ethnic group, region, country, or all of the above? What influences this identification?
2. Lead a discussion about American culture. Which aspects of U.S. culture do students remember learning in school? Which ones did they learn in their homes or from their friends? What is the media’s role in creating a national culture? How much of U.S. culture is based on consumerism?

Extension activity

Divide the class into groups of two or three. Assign each group one of the following conflicts from ProQuest's [World Conflicts Today](http://www.worldconflictstoday.com) (www.worldconflictstoday.com): Chechnya, Darfur, Jammu and Kashmir, Northern Ireland, and the Palestinian Territories. Focusing on the history section especially, have students identify the role that cultural difference plays in the conflict. Then, have each group of students create a brief report on their findings. The reports should explain the values and point of view of each cultural group.

National Identity

Research and Writing

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will understand the components of national identity as well as be aware of current issues affecting France.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Foreign Language Education

Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

- Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Time requirement

Preparation: 45 minutes

In-class: 50 minutes, plus outside research time

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition—France](#)

Instructions

France is a country known for its cultural cohesion and strong sense of patriotism. However, in recent years some in the country have felt that their national identity has been threatened.

1. Introduce the lesson by explaining what national identity is and what it's made up of. You may talk about things like flags, national anthems, historical traditions, holidays, values, etc.
2. Then, have students read the France CultureGram, looking the answer to these questions:
 - a. What factors might cause cultural tension? (e.g., introduction of Islam, proposal to lengthen workweek, fast food restaurants, etc.)
 - b. What factors are a source of national pride? (e.g., language, food, recreation, arts, leisure time, farming, etc.)
3. Using the CultureGram as background, introduce the following events that exemplify France's cultural struggle:

	Article subject	Web address	Cause	Conclusion about Culture
a	Headscarf ban in schools	http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3877873.stm	Increasing numbers of Islamic immigrants	The role of religion in this historically secular state is being debated.
b	France's disappointment in Lance Armstrong winning the Tour de France	http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4468925.stm	France's historic dominance in this race	A sign perhaps of U.S. American dominance in other areas, Armstrong is not loved by the French.
c	Protests against genetically modified food	http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3924623.stm	Both in an attempt to protect France's farmers and avoid possible health hazards	France is against importing and consuming the genetically modified food common in the United States.
d	Anti-fast food and globalization movements	http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1171329.stm	Pride in traditional, world-famous cuisine	France does not welcome the fast food chains that come with globalization.
e	Changes in the <i>Académie française</i>	http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2043714.stm	Pride in the French language	The Academy represents the French desire to keep their language "pure."

4. Have students pick an issue that interests them and do outside research on it.
5. Assign the students to write a short position paper. Explain that they must fulfill these guidelines in the paper: a) present the issue, b) discuss how it is affecting perceptions of France's national identity, and c) offer their opinion on what should be done—if anything—about it.

Questions for further discussion

1. How important is it for a country to have a strong national identity? Is it okay for it to have several national identities?
2. Are there any issues similar to those in France that U.S. Americans see as a threat to U.S. national identity? What are they? What are the students' feelings on them?

Extension activity

At home, have students write an essay in which they describe their sense of U.S. national identity. In class, compare the essays and talk about characteristics that the students share as well as important ways in which they are different. Discuss how these differing perceptions of national identity result in some of the country's most heated debates, including things like gun control, abortion, the death penalty, etc.

Ruler of a New Country

Research and Writing

Grade level

9–12

Objective

Students will create a fictional country using sound geographical, historical, and cultural principles and write a CultureGrams country report for that country.

National curriculum standard(s)

National Standards for Social Studies

Culture

- Standard C [High School]: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can apply an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns.

People, Places, and Environments

- Standard E [High School]: Social studies programs should include experience that provide for the study of *people, places, and environments*, so that the learner can describe, differentiate, and explain the relationships among various regional and global patterns of geographic phenomena such as landforms, soils, climate, vegetation, natural resources, and population.

Global Connections

- Standard B [High School]: Social studies programs should include experience that provide for the study of *global connections and interdependence*, so that the learner can explain conditions and motivations that contribute to conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations.

Developed by the National Council for the Social Studies

Time requirement

Preparation: 30 minutes

In-class: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials

CultureGrams [World Edition](#)

Instructions

1. Give each student a copy of a CultureGrams country report and have him or her read it before class.
2. Conduct an in-class discussion to help students draw connections between categories. Discuss how history or religion impact economy, how land and climate impact transportation, how general attitudes affect visiting, etc.
3. Assign each student to create his or her own fictitious country of which he or she may choose to be the ruler. Inform students of the following rules:
 - a. Students need to follow the natural cause-and-effect principles in geography and history. Meaning, if a student creates a desert-like country, he or she cannot have an economy based on the production of tropical fruits.
 - b. The student's CultureGrams report for his or her fictitious country should include all of the same categories and subcategories as an actual CultureGrams report.
4. Have the students get together in smaller groups (about 4-5 per group) and have them analyze how their countries would get along. Which countries would trade with one another? What political problems might arise? Which country would hold most of the resources? What alliances would develop and why?

Extension activity

Have the social studies and language arts teachers form a panel to judge the students' CultureGrams reports based on writing and plausible connections between categories (i.e., plausible geography/history scenario). Post the winner on the school web site.